



Patient & Family Guide

2024

Managing Fluid Intake



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Managing Fluid Intake

Our bodies need fluid to work properly. The kidneys, liver, and heart work to keep fluids in balance.

Sometimes, fluid builds up in our bodies. You may not feel when it happens.

Signs that fluid may be building up in your body include:

- › Fast weight gain
- › High blood pressure (hypertension)
- › Swelling of your hands and feet
- › Shortness of breath
- › Fatigue (tiredness)
- › Bloating
- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- › Changes in your blood work

With some medical conditions, you may need to limit your fluid intake.

It is important to weigh yourself each day.

Keep a daily routine using the 4 W's:

- › Wake up.
- › Wee (pee).
- › Weigh.
- › Write it down.

Sources of fluid in your diet

Your body gets fluid from water and other drinks (like coffee, tea, milk, juice, pop, alcohol), and also from food. A fluid is anything that would be liquid at body temperature.

Fluids include:

- › All hot and cold drinks
- › Frozen desserts (like ice cream or sorbet)
- › Ice cubes and Popsicles®
- › Gelatin desserts, like Jell-o®
- › Soups, consommé, broth
- › Very juicy fruit (like watermelon, very ripe melons, berries, ripe peaches, or frozen fruit)

Tips for managing your fluid intake

- Measure the amount of fluid you are allowed into a pitcher or a jug when you start your day. Every time you eat or drink a fluid, empty the same amount from the pitcher. When the pitcher is empty, that is all for the day.

250 ml = 8 oz = 1 cup

180 ml = 6 oz = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

125 ml = 4 oz = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

60 ml = 2 oz = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

- Drink small amounts throughout the day.
- Use small cups and glasses.
- Take your pills with as little fluid as possible. You must count this fluid.
- Rinse your mouth with water, but **do not** swallow it. Try ice-cold mouthwash to freshen your mouth.
- Brush your teeth more often throughout the day.
- Drink ice-cold liquids. They can manage your thirst better than room temperature liquids.
- **Suck on ice cubes or ice chips, but remember that they are part of your daily fluid intake.**
 - › For example: Try using ½ cup (125 ml) of water to make ice cubes at night, then pour ½ cup (125 ml) of water from your pitcher first thing in the morning.
- Frozen fruit (like grapes or berries) can be a nice change from ice cubes, but they still count as fluid.
- Suck on hard candy or mints. If you have diabetes, use sugar-free candy. Sour candy works best to help manage thirst.
- Drink lemonade instead of water, or add lemon juice to your ice cubes when you make them.

- Stay away from salty foods. Salt makes you thirsty. It also makes you retain (keep) fluid.
- If you have diabetes, try to keep your blood sugar under control. High blood sugar will make you thirsty.
- Eat healthy foods. Eat protein at each meal. Protein foods include: meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, dairy, dried beans, dried peas, and nuts. Eating healthy foods helps your body keep fluid in the right places.
- Remember to follow eating guidelines for all your medical conditions, like diabetes or kidney disease.

What should I do in hot weather?

You may need extra fluid in hot weather because you are sweating more. You may also need extra fluid if you are more active, or if you have a fever. Ask your health care provider for more information.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you:

- › lose or gain more than 4 pounds (2 kg) over 2 days (48 hours). You do not gain fat overnight. Sudden changes in your weight are likely caused by fluid.
- › have more shortness of breath.
- › have swelling in your hands, feet or belly area.
- › have new blurred vision.
- › feel bloated or your stomach is upset.
- › feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- › have side effects from your medications.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away or call 911 if you:

- › have tightness or pain in your chest.
- › are very short of breath (trouble breathing).
- › are coughing up pink, frothy mucus.

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Other contacts: _____

Phone: _____

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.