

# Managing Fluid Intake

## Notes:

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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>

*Prepared by:* Nutrition and Food Services  
*Designed by:* Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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

## 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.

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_



## 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)
- 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.

## 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 = ¾ cup  
125 ml = 4 oz = ½ cup  
60 ml = 2 oz = ¼ cup

- 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.