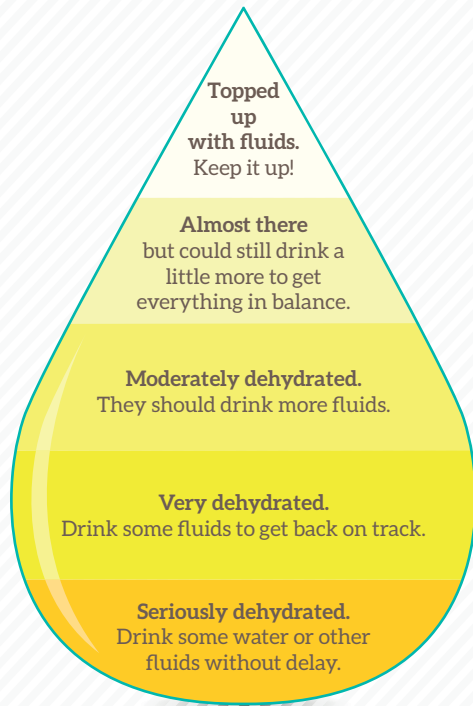


How dehydrated are they?

A quick way to test how well a person is hydrated is to check the colour of their urine. Use this colour chart as a guide.



Dehydration leaves people at a higher risk of:

- Infection.
- Falling.
- Skin problems and poor wound healing.
- Kidney problems.

For more information or if you require this leaflet in large format text contact:

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Hy5

~ Identifying and preventing dehydration using the 5 senses



A Leaflet for Carers

This leaflet has been developed to help domiciliary and social care professionals to identify and prevent dehydration



Sight

- Are they drowsy/not themselves?
- Do they have low urine output which is more yellow/orange than normal?
~ refer to the colour chart on the reverse of this leaflet.



Smell

- Do they have bad breath?
Saliva flushes food particles from the teeth and washes acid away.
Dehydration can prevent the body from making enough saliva.



Hearing

- Listen to what they are saying.
 - Has their speech changed?
 - Do they sound confused?
- Are they complaining of:
- Headache.
 - Feeling dizzy.
 - Feeling itchy.



Touch

- Dry skin is often felt more than it's seen.
- Do the skin test ~
Using 2 fingers gently pinch the skin on the back of the hand and then let it go.
The skin should spring back to its normal position in less than a couple of seconds.
If it takes longer they may be dehydrated.
- Do their legs, hands, forearms and eyes look dry? (flakes of skin can look grey).
- Have they few or no tears?
Some medications, including diuretics, and antihistamines, may dry out the skin.



Taste

- Do they have a dry mouth, cracked lips, rough and dry tongue, and sores around the mouth?
- Is eating and swallowing difficult?
- Lack of salivation can make the tongue painful.
- Saliva helps to taste and digest food.
- A dry throat makes choking more common.
- Is there increased thirst?
- Are there food cravings for chocolate, a salty snack, or sweets?

Preventing dehydration

Food

- Swap dry snacks with prepared fresh/frozen fruit – melon, watermelon, strawberries, tomatoes.
- Provide snacks of cut vegetables with a high water content – cucumber, celery, lettuce and leafy greens, courgettes, and peppers.
- Eat yogurt or drink smoothies.
- Aim to make half their plate fruit and vegetables.
- Encourage the person to sip drinks during meals.

Drink

- Remind them to have a drink at least every half hour.
- Increase cup size – using a sports bottle may be easier to hold for some people.
- Avoid alcohol, including beer and wine.
- Consider flavoured ice lollipops and popsicles.
- Have a drink handy – if the cup is nearby it is easier to sip without even realising it.
- Adding fruit juice to water can make it more enjoyable to drink.
- Try different flavoured teas.
- Drink room temperature or cooler water.

Clothing in hot weather

- Wearing one layer of lightweight, light-coloured clothing reduces the risk of dehydration.
- Change into dry clothing as soon possible if clothes get wet.

Activity

- Being physically active may take attention away from drinking. Active people may dehydrate quickly so make sure that they rehydrate.
- Discourage activity if the person is feeling dizzy, lightheaded, or very tired.