

BEST PRACTICE HYDRATION TECHNIQUES

Identify Risk Factors for Dehydration

Risk factors for dehydration in nursing homes include:

- ❖ Cognitive impairment (e. g. dementia, Alzheimer's)
- ❖ Purposeful restriction of fluid intake
- ❖ Increased age causing decreased thirst perception
- ❖ Infection and/ or fever, recent rapid weight loss
- ❖ Communication problems due to dementia, aphasia, stroke
- ❖ Decreased kidney function
- ❖ Uncontrolled diabetes
- ❖ Medications (e.g., diuretics, laxatives, antipsychotics, Digoxin)
- ❖ Functional impairment such as hand dexterity problems
- ❖ Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia), thickened liquids
- ❖ Individuals who are dependent on staff
- ❖ Enteral Nutrition and Terminal illnesses

Facility factors also play a role.

- ◆ Staff Education: Ensure staff understands that withholding fluids does not control incontinence and may have serious medical consequences symptoms of dehydration such as heart problems. Ensure staff recognizes signs and symptoms of dehydration.
- ◆ Staff Assistance: Ensure staff are not rushed and have adequate time to feed, to properly position individuals, to offer additional fluids, and to pour second servings of beverages
- ◆ Hydration plan/program: Ensures individuals get the fluids they need throughout the day

Fluid needs are assessed at least annually:

- 100 ml/kg for first 10 kg actual body weight**
- 50 ml/kg for second 10 kg actual body weight**
- 15 ml/kg for remaining kg actual body weight**



Promote Good Hydration

- ◆ Provide liquids before and with meals.
 - ❖ Mealtime is when the most fluid is consumed
 - ❖ Provide two or more beverages or high-fluid fruits or foods
 - ❖ Refill or reintroduce items not consumed
- ◆ Provide liquids between meals.
 - ❖ Use a beverage cart with a variety of liquids, including thickened liquids, twice a day
 - ❖ Provide a water pitcher within reach and light enough for the individual to lift
 - ❖ Assist persons who are immobile with fluids
 - ❖ Use water bottles with sippers
 - ❖ Include enticing beverages as desserts (floats and smoothies)
 - ❖ Use special events or Happy Hour to offer non-alcoholic beverages
 - ❖ Provide fluids during Group Activities.
 - ❖ Provide fluids during therapy sessions
- ◆ Provide liquids during medication pass. Offer 4-6 ounces of fluid to all residents whether given medications or not
- ◆ Offer fluid-dense foods. Gelatin, soup, juice, shakes, sherbet, fruit such as watermelon, and berries
- ◆ Observe beverage preferences. Especially important for people with cognitive impairment
- ◆ Use verbal prompts. Encourage individuals to drink with every contact especially those with cognitive impairment
- ◆ Provide assistance. Position the person to minimize aspiration risk and assist with drinking beverages
- ◆ Provide staff education. Staff must understand how their actions prevent dehydration. Educate staff on how to offer fluids.
- ◆ Track and review fluid intake. Accurately monitor fluid intake closely
- ◆ Maintain an appropriate environment. Maintain a comfortable temperature and humidity level in the facility