



Your Guide to Hydration

Step up to the challenge.
Drink more for good health!



me +

TM

How?

How much should I drink?

There are no hard and fast rules about how much you should drink. Everyone will have different needs from one day to the next. NHS guidelines for a normal healthy person recommend around 6-8 glasses of fluid (1.5 – 2 litres) per day^[1], but some people will need more and others less. Use your urine colour as the best guide.

Have a choice of drinks that you enjoy. Everything counts - tea, coffee, juice, squash, water, milk and electrolyte drinks.



What?

What should I drink?

Contrary to popular belief, plain water is not a good hydrator. In order for fluid to be well absorbed by the body, a drink needs to have a small amount of glucose and some sodium. This is a concept known as osmolarity. Sports drinks are often recommended when you have a loose output, but they are very high in sugar and can be unhealthy.

Instead, choose to drink dilute squash or fruit juice with a pinch of salt or have an electrolyte drink such as Dioralyte™ which can be purchased over the counter in the chemist, supermarket or make your own electrolyte solution at home using glucose powder, sodium and bicarbonate of soda (find this online by searching for St Mark's Solution)

Why?

What are the symptoms?

Many people – both with and without a stoma – are chronically dehydrated every day. Symptoms such as headaches and tiredness can be attributed to other health conditions, but they are often due to dehydration.



- Headache



- Thirsty and dry mouth



- Dark urine



- Tiredness and fatigue



- Poor concentration

We all know that drinking plenty of fluid is vital for good health but when you have a stoma it becomes even more important. If you have an ileostomy, your hydration needs are greater and more complex because you lose extra fluid through your stoma output [2].

With a colostomy, high output isn't usually an issue, but dehydration can cause constipation and blockages. People with a urostomy sometimes unintentionally avoid drinking, which causes dehydration.

Good hydration really is important for everyone.

Being well hydrated is important for every single biological function of your body; it helps you stay alert, improves concentration and is vital for all aspects of your health and wellbeing. However, most people don't drink enough fluid and research shows the majority of people with an ileostomy regularly show some signs of dehydration.^[2] Even mild dehydration can make you feel tired and unwell, so this advice is valuable for everyone with a stoma.

How does your body lose fluid?

During a typical day the average person loses approx. 2.5 litres of fluid through sweat, urine, breath and faeces.^[3]

Air conditioning, exercise, warm temperatures and central heating also increase fluid losses.

In addition, normal fluid losses from your stoma are around 500-1000ml per day depending on your type of stoma.

This is why you need to drink more and choose drinks with electrolytes to help absorption.

Speak to your stoma nurse for more advice, especially if you regularly have losses in excess of 1000ml per day. This puts you at an even higher risk of Dehydration.

If you regularly have particularly high or watery output you should speak to your stoma nurse or GP about treatment and medication options. Minimising stoma output losses is as important as making sure you drink enough.

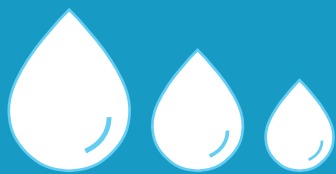
The best indicator of your hydration status is your urine colour.

For when you are on the go, we have created a handy card to keep with you so you are able to check your hydration level.

How does the colour of your urine compare to the chart?*

Aim for light straw coloured urine, this means you're probably drinking enough. If your urine is darker in colour you need to drink more fluid.

If your urine is completely clear, you may actually be drinking too much and flushing electrolytes out of your body.



* IF YOU FEEL SEVERELY DEHYDRATED OR IF YOUR URINE IS VERY DARK IN COLOUR, THEN SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY

How hydrated are you?

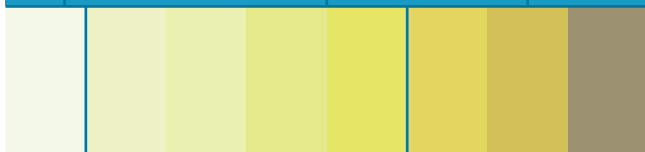
Check your urine colour against the chart below



OVER HYDRATED

WELL HYDRATED

LESS HYDRATED



Most people simply don't drink enough.

It's better to stay one step ahead of dehydration. Drink little and often every day.
You probably need to drink much more than you think.

**Drinking more is one of the simplest ways to improve
your health and wellbeing.**

Top Tips for Healthy Hydration

DRINK little and often

Set an hourly alarm on your phone or watch to remind you to drink.

YOUR BODY knows best

Everyone is different.
Listen to your body and tune into your own hydration needs.

In the SUMMERTIME

Choose an electrolyte solution when it's hot and make an effort to drink more.

DON'T WAIT until you're thirsty

By then you'll already be dehydrated.
Stay one step ahead – drink little and often.

DRINK on the move

A hydration backpack is a great option when out and about hiking, sightseeing or cycling.

ALWAYS TAKE a drink when you go out

Never assume you'll be able to buy a drink. Be prepared and take one with you.

HYDRATE for activity

Hydrate well before, during and after activity. Choose an electrolyte drink instead of water.

AT WORK

Air conditioning is deceptively dehydrating. Take a drink into meetings and keep a bottle on your desk.

GET THE balance right

Don't be over-zealous with your drinking. It is possible to drink too much water which can increase output and make dehydration worse.

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