Hydration

Why it’s important for me
What is healthy hydration?

The human body is made up of more than two thirds water. So having enough to drink helps you to stay healthy. Your body needs water to aid digestion, lubricate joints and eyes and to help the kidneys flush out waste.

Drinking enough has positive benefits to your physical and mental health and keeps your skin healthy.

Relying on feeling thirsty as a guide to when to drink is less reliable as you get older! Sometimes people cut down on fluid to avoid having to visit the toilet, or reduce risks of “accidents”.

Actually it can have the opposite effect, with more urine infections and incontinence. It also increases risk of constipation, falls (though dizziness, low blood pressure or infection), pressure sores and hospital admissions.

How Much Should I Drink?

Aim to drink between six to eight drinks per day. Water, tea, milk, fruit juice, and coffee all count towards this total.

If you have a poor appetite, aim to choose more nourishing drinks such as milky drinks.

Alcohol does not count as it can make you more dehydrated.
How do I know if I’m not drinking enough?
If you are not drinking enough fluids your body will become dehydrated.

Signs of dehydration can be:
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Dry mouth or feeling thirsty
- Confusion or feeling muddled
- Feeling light headed or dizzy
- Constipation
- Dark, smelly urine
- Dry skin and lips.

What can I do to stay hydrated?
- Make sure you drink 6-8 cups of fluid per day
- Have a drink with each meal
- Try to always finish your glass/cup
- Have a full glass when taking tablets
- Always make sure you have a drink near you and sip it regularly
- Choose foods which contain fluid, for example switching from toast to cereal and milk
- Have vegetable with meals
- Try soup, ice-cream, yoghurts and jelly
- When people visit always try to have a drink with them.
Are you worried about ........

- **Going to the toilet more often**
  
  Good hydration does not lead to extra toileting in the long term but if you have any questions please ask your GP or community nurses supporting you.

- **Forgetting to drink**
  
  Set yourself a reminder or ask family or carers to remind you to have a drink and drink when reminded.

- **Choking or difficult to swallow when having a drink**
  
  You may need to be assessed by a specialist and your GP can arrange this.

- **Struggling to hold the cup or glass**
  
  Ask your family or carers to try different cups/glasses. Straws may help. The carer will also help you if this is still a problem.

- **Getting up in the night to go to the toilet**
  
  Try drinking more of your fluids earlier in the day. Aim to have a minimum of 4 glasses before lunch.

**DRINK WELL FOR HEALTH**