

Controlling your fluid balance

This leaflet is for patients with kidney disease. It tells you why and how to control the amount of fluid you drink, and suggests ways of reducing thirst. If you have any further questions, please contact us using the details on the back page.

Why do I need to control the amount I drink?

Kidneys control the amount of fluid in the body. As kidneys fail, they become unable to do this. Once you start dialysis, it is likely that you will need to reduce the amount you drink each day to prevent fluid from building up in the body. You will need to limit the amount that you drink as well as the amount of 'wet' foods that you eat. Your dietitian will give you more advice about this.

If you take in more water than you get rid of, the extra fluid stays in your body. This is known as **fluid overload**. Fluid overload can strain your heart and lungs and can be dangerous. If you take in too little fluid (or lose a lot, for example through sickness or diarrhoea) you may become **dehydrated**. Finding the right balance is not always easy.

Your fluid allowance (the volume of daily fluid that is healthy for you) will depend on the dialysis you are having, your blood pressure and the amount of urine passed. You may be asked to measure the urine you pass in 24 hours to help calculate your fluid allowance.

How much fluid can I have each day? ml (millilitres)

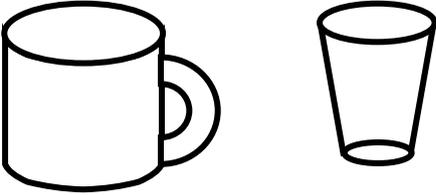
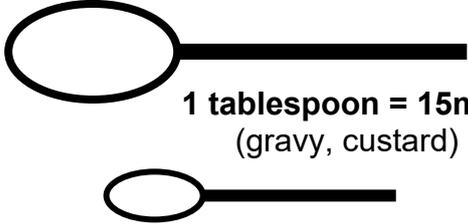
How to keep to a fluid allowance

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a smaller cup and spread your drinks throughout the day. • Sip drinks slowly – try freezing a drink in a 200ml plastic bottle and sip it throughout the day as it defrosts. • Use an ice cube in place of a drink to refresh your mouth – try making them with fruit squash. Count them in your fluid allowance. • Suck on a slice of lemon or lime. • Chew sugar-free gum. • Rinse your mouth with mouthwash or some iced water. • Unless otherwise advised, take tablets with food instead of water. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain vegetables and tinned fruits and make sure washed salad is dried. • Limit fluid from foods, for example sauces, soup, gravy, custard, jelly, porridge. • Remember, cold drinks quench your thirst more than hot drinks. • If you have a dry mouth, ask your GP for artificial saliva or gel to ease this. • Limit the amount of spicy and salty foods you eat. • Do not add salt to meals and reduce stock cubes, Maggie cubes and salted seasonings in cooking, as they increase thirst. Try using fresh or dried herbs instead. |
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Will I feel thirsty?

You will feel thirsty if you have a high intake of salt, so it is important to lower the amount of salt in your diet. Avoid adding salt when cooking or at the table, and cut down on salty foods. Once you begin to eat less salt, your taste buds will adjust in a few weeks. Ask your dietitian for the **eating less salt diet sheet** for more information. If you have diabetes, good blood sugar control will also help to control your thirst.

How much fluid is in ...?

 <p>1 tea cup = 150ml</p>	 <p>1 can of fizzy drink = 330ml</p>
 <p>1 mug of tea = 250–300ml</p> <p>1 styrofoam cup used on haemodialysis units = 150ml</p>	 <p>1 pint of beer = 600ml</p> <p>½ pint of beer = 300ml</p>
 <p>1 ice cube = 15ml</p> <p>150ml cup of ice = 100ml</p>	 <p>1 tablespoon = 15ml (gravy, custard)</p> <p>1 teaspoon = 5ml</p>
 <p>Milk on cereal (small) = 150ml</p> <p>Milk in porridge (large) = 300ml</p>	 <p>1 glass of wine Small = 125ml Large = 250ml</p> <p>1 measure of spirits Spirits = 25ml</p>

Useful conversions

one litre = 1000ml	half a litre = 500ml	One pint = 600ml	Half a pint = 300ml	A quarter = 150ml
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How will I change what I drink? For example, number of drinks in the day, size of drinks.

Further information

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact the **renal dietitians** on **020 7188 4128**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

