

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

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Patient information

## How to control your fluid

### Information for patients with kidney disease

Nutrition and Dietetics Department



Why do I need to control my fluid?

Kidneys control the amount of fluid in your body. When your kidneys are not working properly, they are less able to control the fluid in your body. When you are on dialysis, you will need to reduce the amount you drink. This is an important part of your treatment.

How much can I drink?

The amount of fluid allowed differs from one person to another because it depends on the amount of urine that you pass daily.

Your daily fluid allowance is based on:  
**500mls + the volume of urine you pass in 24 hours**

(For example if you do not pass any urine then your allowance = 500mls. If you pass about 500mls per day of urine per day then your allowance = 1000mls/1 litre)

Therefore your fluid allowance is: ..... mls per day

Between dialysis sessions the weight you gain is due to fluid. As a guide you should not gain more than 1.5 -2kg between dialysis sessions during the week (i.e. between Monday to Wednesday and Tuesday to Thursday) and 2.5kg between dialysis sessions at the weekend (i.e. Friday to Monday or Saturday to Tuesday)

Dialysis will remove fluid from your body but if you drink more than your daily fluid allowance on a regular basis you will experience:

- **Fluid overload: this will put a strain on your heart and will eventually weaken your heart muscle**
  - High blood pressure
  - Shortness of breath (especially when you lie flat)
  - Oedema (swelling) for example in your legs and ankles, this may cause your legs to feel heavy and uncomfortable

3. Dry mouth

If you feel thirsty because your mouth is dry, try using artificial saliva gels or spray rather than drinking.

Speak to your GP if you have further questions about this.

Useful information

Talk to your dietitian if you have other questions or require further help with controlling your fluid.

You may also find the following websites useful:

- [www.actiononsalt.org.uk](http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk)
- [www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/fss/salt](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/fss/salt)
- [www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk/](http://www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk/)
- [www.kidney.org.uk](http://www.kidney.org.uk)

Additional notes:

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Name:

Date:

Dietitian:

Contact Number:

Hospital Site:

## What else affects my fluid control?

If you feel thirsty then you might feel like you want to drink more.

### 1. Salt

Salt makes you feel more thirsty and can worsen the symptoms of fluid overload. It is important to cut down on your salt intake:

Salt mainly comes from:

- Processed foods e.g. ham, salami or cheese
- Salt or stock cubes e.g. Oxo or Maggi cubes added in cooking
- Salt added at the table or in cooking

Even without drinking, extra salt will make you retain fluid. Each teaspoon of salt (6g) is equivalent to 600mls of fluid. Talk to your dietitian if you want more information about how to cut down on your salt.

### Food Labels

As a guide when looking at food labels:

A 'little' salt	Less than 0.3g (0.1g sodium) per 100g
A 'lot' of salt	Over 1.3g salt (0.5g sodium) per 100g

### 2. Blood glucose

If you have diabetes, good blood glucose (sugar) control will help you control your thirst.

Talk to your dietitian, diabetes nurse or GP if you want more advice

## What does my fluid allowance mean?

Your fluid allowance includes everything you drink including:

- Water
- Tea
- Coffee\*
- Milk\*
- Squash
- Fizzy drinks\*
- Alcohol\*

Remember some foods contain fluid which needs to be included in your allowance:

- Yoghurt\*
- Ice cubes
- Gravy
- Jelly
- Custard\*
- Ice cream\*
- Soup\*






\*within your potassium and/or phosphate allowances

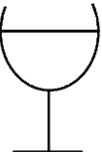




There can also be a lot of fluid in stews, casseroles and curries (particularly dhal). Ask your dietitian for further advice.

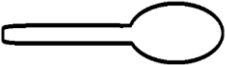
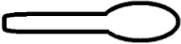

Rice is not high in fluid and does not need to be restricted in order to limit your fluid intake. Similarly fruit and vegetables will not contribute to your fluid allowance.

See the next page for some example fluid measurements and top tips for controlling your fluid.

## Example fluid measurements

<b>Average bottle</b> 	<b>Small bottle</b> 	<b>Polystyrene cup (dialysis)</b> 	<b>Small china cup</b> 	<b>A mug</b> 
500mls	330mls	175mls	150mls	300mls

<b>Small glass wine</b> 	<b>Milk on cereal</b> 	<b>Ice cream in cone</b> 	<b>Standard can</b> 	<b>Half pint beer</b> 
175mls	100mls	75mls	330mls	284mls

<b>1 tablespoon</b> (gravy, custard)		15mls
<b>1 teaspoon</b>		5mls
<b>1 ice cube</b>		15-30mls

## Tips to help you control your fluid

- Measure how much you are drinking during the day  
- don't guess!
- Divide your fluid allowance evenly throughout the day. For example if you are allowed three cups per day have one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening.
- Use smaller cups or glasses, for example china teacups, espresso coffee cups or small tumblers.
- Using part of your fluid allowance to make ice cubes and suck them slowly  
- make flavoured ice cubes by freezing diluted squash (sugar free if you have diabetes)
- Suck a sweet or mint (sugar free if you have diabetes)
- Chew some gum (sugar free if you have diabetes).
- Keep some pieces of fruit, for example cubes of pineapple, satsuma segments or grapes in the fridge and eat a piece when you feel thirsty or your mouth becomes dry.
- Gargle with water or alcohol free mouth wash from time to time, but do not swallow!
- Spicy food may increase your thirst, try to use milder spices or replace them with garlic/herbs.
- Cold drinks can help quench your thirst more than hot drinks
- If possible, take tablets with food rather than water
- Save your fluid allowance for thirst quenching drinks rather than soups or runny dhal.