**Oral Rehydration Fluids**

1. Can be obtained from a pharmacy or supermarket
2. Can be made at home by mixing together:
* 1 litre of water
* 6 level teaspoons of sugar / glucose powder
* 1/2 level teaspoon of salt
* 1/2 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
* Cordial to taste1

Take sips every few minutes until urine colour returns to a pale, clear yellow and you are feeling better.

If you have diabetes, renal or cardiac problems which restrict your fluid intake talk to a pharmacist or STN

**For the person with a stoma:**

If you are admitted to hospital because of an episode of diarrhoea leading to dehydration, ensure you contact your STN for an early appointment

**Disclaimer** *The information in this brochure:*

* *has been developed as a general guide only*
* *relates to adults only*

*Any concerns need to be discussed with your STN or doctor*

**Prepared by the** Australian Association of Stomal Therapy Nurses Inc. Education and Professional Development Committee [www.stomaltherapy.](http://www.stomaltherapy.)au

**References**

1. Salts Healthcare, Patient information brochure- Dehydration and the Ostomate. 2014

**Developed March 2016**

***Level 1V Evidence (Expert Opinion)***

**Prevention and**

**management of DEHYDRATION**

**in adults**

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ABN 16 072 891 322

Stoma / Wound / Continence

**General Information**

It is important that you have a well-balanced diet and adequate fluid intake to maintain your body’s **hydration balance** ie

**Fluids lost from the body = fluids taken into the body**

**Fluid losses:** Urine Water vapour from breathing

 Stool Sweat (visible and invisible)

**Fluid gains:** Drinks Foods

**What is dehydration?**

* A condition where fluids lost **exceed** fluids taken into the body
* Can be mild, moderate or severe (life-threatening)
* Some essential salts will also be lost in these fluids

**Causes:**

 High temperatures Heat exposure Too much exercise

 Vomiting / diarrhoea Urine infections Diabetes

 Insufficient fluid intake Some medications (especially diuretics)

**For people with stomas:**

* Removal or bypassing of the large bowel reduces the body’s ability to conserve water from the stool
* Stoma output that exceeds 1 litre in 24 hours

**Identifying dehydration:**

Symptoms vary but may include any of these:

* Increased thirst and / or dry mouth
* Reduced urine output – urine is darker in colour than usual
* Feeling of weakness / lethargy
* Headache
* Dizziness or feeling faint
* Palpitations (heart pounding / jumping)
* Constipation
* Inability to sweat
* Weight loss and lack of skin fullness (turgour)

**What to do if any of these symptoms occur:**

* Increase fluid intake – suck on ice chips or cubes
* Reduce activity and seek shelter from heat / sun
* Reduce body temperature if raised, by removing excess clothing / bedding, reducing ambient room temperature, wiping limbs and face with wet towels or having a cool, NOT cold shower
* Aim to drink 2 litres (6 – 8 glasses) of fluid per day
* Seek medical help if symptoms don’t improve within an hour
* Seek early assistance from a health professional regarding use of sports or electrolyte-replacing drinks

**If diarrhoea is the cause of the dehydration** and it persists for 24 hours check with your doctor or Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN)

**Foods to help THICKEN your stool output:**

Pasta Pumpkin Dumplings Custard Tapioca Pancakes Pretzels Bananas Toast Cheese Mashed potato Apple sauce Arrowroot Marshmallow Rice Uncooked corn flour Jelly babies/beans Smooth peanut butter White bread (not fresh) Fresh grated apple (no skin)

**Other options:**

* Avoid high intake of fibre-rich foods
* Some bulking agents may help to thicken stool – talk to your STN
* Various antidiarrhoeal medications are available from a pharmacy

**PREVENTION of dehydration:**

* Aim to drink 2 litres (6 – 8 glasses) of fluid per day
* Limit caffeine drinks (tea, coffee, cola) which increase fluid loss
* Avoid alcohol which increases fluid loss
* Plan ahead – take extra water to school, work or exercise area
* Exercise in the cool of the day and wear appropriate clothing
* Wash your hands before food preparation or eating
* Advise your doctor or pharmacist if medications cause a problem

**For the person with a stoma:** monitor your output regularly