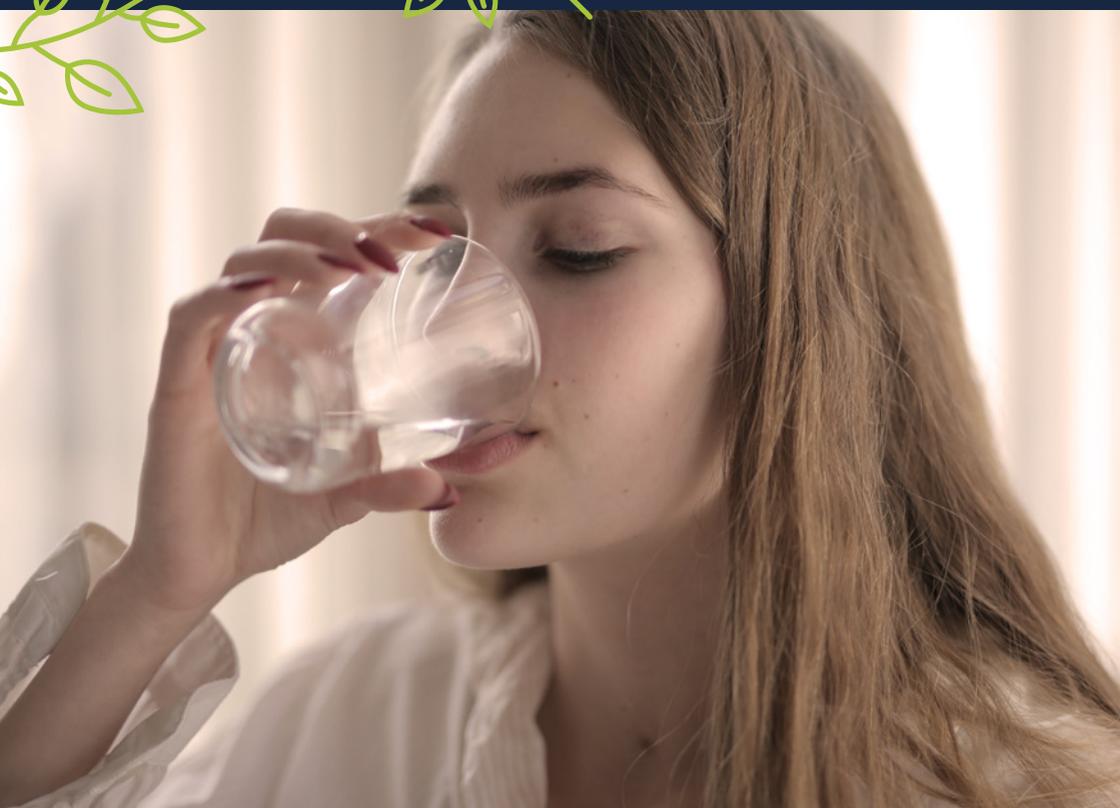




Staying hydrated with a urinary catheter



The human body can't survive without proper hydration and needs fluid to work properly. Why? Simple, because we're mostly made of water! In fact, 50% to 60% of your body weight is water. We know, quite a lot!

So, what does the water in our bodies actually do? Lots of things! It helps your body to get rid of unwanted waste material via your pee, it helps to keep your joints lubricated properly, it transports nutrients to places in the body where they need to be, and your body also uses it to control its temperature. There's even some evidence out there that drinking enough water will make your skin look good!

If you're using a catheter of any kind, you're probably extra aware of how important hydration is in order to maintain a healthy bladder. It will also help you reduce the risk of any urinary catheter complications and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs).

Why is it especially important to drink enough if I have a urinary catheter?

Catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs)

If you have a urinary catheter, you're already more prone to developing CAUTIs. Add not drinking enough to the mix and there's an even higher risk of developing a urinary tract infection. This is because it gives bacteria in your bladder time to multiply. Drinking more fluids generally helps to flush that bacteria from your body. Not drinking enough also means that your catheter isn't flushed through enough, which also comes with the risk of other complications like catheter blockages.



Constipation

If you're not drinking enough over a longer period of time, this might cause you to become constipated. It can either be that you experience fewer bowel movements or difficulty and discomfort when going for a poo. Drinking more will make your stool softer again and you will find it easier to go to the toilet. With an indwelling catheter it's even more important that you try to avoid constipation. Why? Because a full bowel can press on your bladder which can put pressure on your catheter. This can lead to urine not being drained properly, which can cause urinary infections.

How do I know if I'm dehydrated?

Healthy Urine:



Drink More:



How do you become dehydrated in the first place? It's easier than you might think! As soon as you don't drink enough fluids or if you don't replace lost fluids quickly enough, you will soon experience the first symptoms of dehydration.

Dark and strong-smelling pee is generally a sign that you are dehydrated. Generally, the colour of your urine should be anywhere between 1 and 3 on the chart. If it's between 4 and 8, it's time to grab yourself a glass of water (or two)! Bear in mind that certain things you eat or drink can have an effect on the colour of your pee. So if you had beetroot or bright-coloured fizzy drink, don't be surprised if your urine suddenly changes colour.

Although the colour of your pee is a great indicator whether you are dehydrated or not, it's by far not the only one! The next most common indicator whether you're dehydrated or not is feeling thirsty. If you're feeling thirsty you are already in the first stages of being dehydrated.

To properly rehydrate your body, it's important that you don't just drink enough to still the thirst but add another glass of water on top.

Other tell-tale signs are the number of times you pee per day, feeling dizzy and tired, or having a dry mouth and lips. If dehydration goes on and isn't treated, it can become severe and will require medical attention at a certain point. Symptoms of severe dehydration include lethargy, confusion, not passing urine for 8 hours or more, a weak or rapid pulse, seizures, and slipping in and out of consciousness. Severe dehydration can become life-threatening for everyone, but it is particularly dangerous for older people and infants.

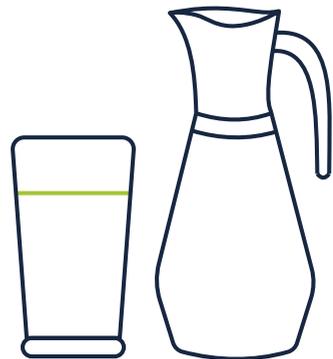
Dehydration symptoms

Dehydration:

- Less frequent, lower volume and darker urination
- Dry lips, mouth and eyes
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded (especially on standing)
- Headaches
- Muscle cramps
- Lack of concentration
- Constipation

Severe dehydration

- Feeling unusually tired or confused
- Weak or rapid pulse
- Seizures
- Being unusually drowsy or unrousable



Who is particularly at risk of becoming dehydrated?

- Older people: There's a chance they don't know that they're becoming dehydrated so they need someone to remind them that they need to keep drinking fluids.
- People with long-term conditions like alcoholism and diabetes
- Babies & infants: Due to their low body weight they are very sensitive to small amounts of fluid loss.
- Athletes: They can lose a large amount of fluid through sweat when exercising for long periods.

Which fluids can I drink to stay hydrated?

The best way to make sure you're staying hydrated properly is to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. The general consensus is to drink anywhere between 3 to 4 pints, or 1.8 litres to 2.4 litres. If you are especially active or the weather is particularly hot, make sure to increase your fluid intake per day. If you are ill with a fever, diarrhoea, or vomiting, it is super important to replace the lost fluid quickly.

When choosing what you're drinking, you should always keep in mind what you're doing. For example, if your task of the day simply includes light housework, it's likely you only need a glass of water. If you're planning on running a marathon, however, you might benefit from opting for a sports drink instead.

Water

Water can be from the tap, filtered, bottled, still, sparkling, plain, or flavoured – all of the available options are equally as hydrating. Just make sure to choose an option that is low in sugar! As a general guideline, anything that's <5mg/100m is a good choice!

Diluted fruit juice and milky smoothies

Make sure to not have huge amounts of either of those per day as they are generally high in sugar.

Milk-based drinks (e.g. milky coffee)

There's a common misconception that caffeine is dehydrating. That's not exactly true, though. If your daily caffeine intake is about 3 or 4 cups of caffeinated tea or coffee daily, it will actually contribute to your hydration levels. If you regularly drink more than that, however, it can overstimulate your bladder and bowels and you can lose an increased amount of fluid which can make you dehydrated.

Well-diluted squash or cordial

Coconut water

Where does alcohol stand on this list?

Alcohol is well-known to irritate your bladder and it also gets your body to produce more urine. On top of that, it can also overstimulate your bowels. And that's exactly why alcohol doesn't count towards your hydrating fluids per day. Try to stay within the recommended amount of 14 units per week and spread those over 4 days. This gives your body a well-deserved 2 day break!

This is what 14 units looks like:



6 pints of
4% beer



6 (175ml)
glasses of
13% wine



14 (25ml)
glasses of
40% spiritis

Can food help me stay hydrated?

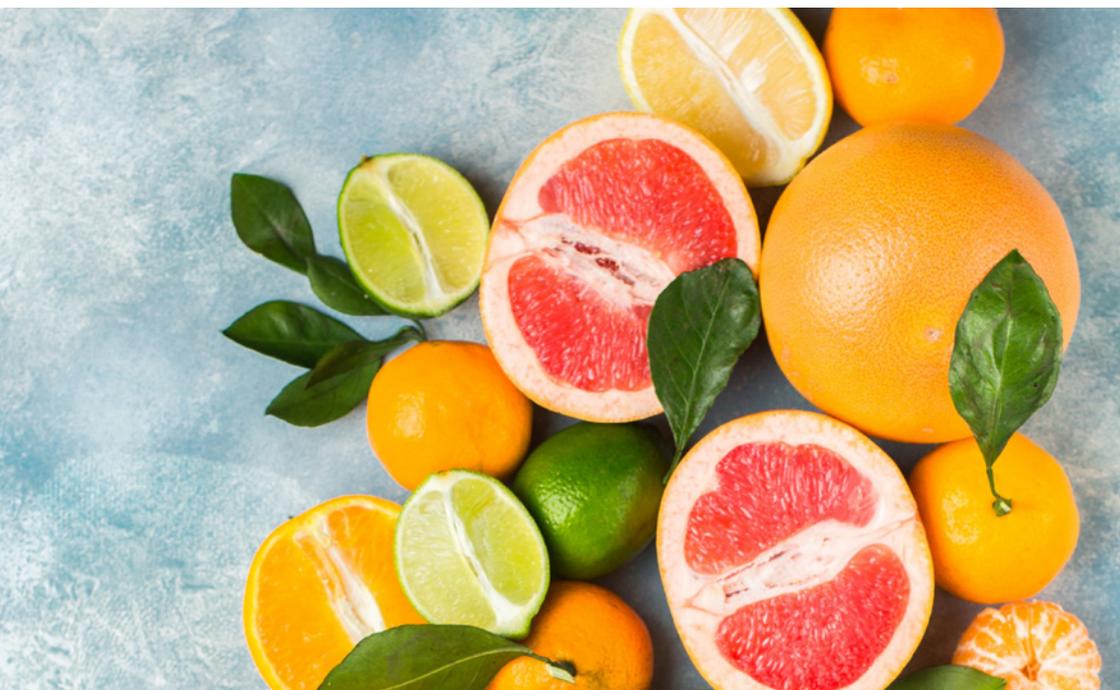
Absolutely, yes! Around 20% to 30% of your water intake comes from what you eat. Lots of fruits and vegetables are high in water and can, therefore, help you to stay hydrated. Here are some examples of fruit and veg that will help you keep your hydration levels high:

Fruit:

- Watermelon
- Peach
- Apple
- Grapefruit
- Berries
- Pineapple
- Tomato
- Orange

Vegetables:

- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Courgette
- Broccoli
- Pepper
- Mushroom
- Cauliflower
- Celery



An example of what a day could look like for increasing hydration...

Food or drink and measure	Approximate fluid provided
A medium bowl of cereal with semi-skimmed milk	150ml
Small glass of diluted orange juice (1/2 water)	150ml
Cup of tea	300ml
Large bread roll with cottage cheese (-90g) and cucumber (-60g)	72ml + 57ml
Standard sized bottle of water	500ml
1 medium apple (-160g)	140ml
Large glass of diluted squash with 3 ice cubes	325ml + 75ml
Medium pot of yoghurt (-125g)	110ml
Sausages with mashed potato (made with milk) and gravy (1/4 of a mug, -75g)	100ml + 65ml
Home-made iced lolly (-80g)	55ml
	Total fluid 2099ml



Always be mindful with your fruit intake, though, as it contains a lot of sugar. A great rule of thumb is to only have 2 portions, or about 80 grams, at a time. What if I've got diabetes? If you're suffering from diabetes, it's super important that you speak to your nurse or doctor about your fruit intake.

It's not just fruit and veg that will help you keep hydrated, though. Other foods with a high water content include:

- Cottage cheese
- Yoghurt
- Custard
- Soups
- Broths
- Sauces
- Gravies
- Ice lollies
- Jellies

Bear in mind that some of the foods mentioned here are fairly high in sugar or sweeteners and shouldn't make it onto your daily meal plan!



I'm a carer, what can I do?

Whether you are a carer by profession or if you are simply looking after a family member or friend, making sure the person you are caring for is drinking enough can be challenging. Sometimes, they might be unaware of how much they're actually drinking and how much they need to drink. And if you're looking after someone who doesn't want to drink at all it can be especially difficult. So, what can you do?

A good first step is to keep track of how much and what they are drinking on a daily basis. How? Easy! There is a super handy drinking chart at the end of this document that you can simply print out. Make sure that the person you're looking after has constant access to fluids throughout the day. That way, they are more inclined to take a sip here and there!

Is the person you're caring for ill? Then it's especially important that all fluids lost due to fever, vomiting, or diarrhoea are replaced quickly. However, with an upset tummy it can be difficult to keep anything down. So, if they're struggling, try to make them drink small sips at a time. This will help to increase their hydration level!

Top hydrating tips

- Always have a full water bottle with you when you're leaving the house! For extra encouragement, try a motivational water bottle that reminds the person you're looking after how much they should be drinking.
- Everyone likes a little bit of social time so why not try and have a cuppa together?
- Make it exciting and offer them something else than just water. Everything from well-diluted squash to coconut water can be an encouragement!
- If they aren't drinking enough, give them foods with a high water content.
- Who doesn't like a popsicle? To make it healthier, simply make your own from diluted squash, fruit juice or even milky smoothies.
- Adding sauces to foods can also help to increase their daily fluid intake. So why not add a little bit of extra gravy to your Sunday roast? Or maybe some custard for that pie that's waiting in the fridge?

How do I know that medical support is required?

If someone you are looking after is showing any of the following symptoms, either call their GP or, if it's out of hours, the NHS healthline (111). If it can't wait, take them to your nearest A&E as quickly as possible.

Emergency symptoms:

- Nausea & vomiting
- Significantly less urine
- Very dark coloured urine
- Unusual tiredness or confusion
- A weak or rapid pulse
- Seizures or fits
- Unusual drowsiness
- Being unrousable

How to get in touch

If you have any further questions or just want a little chat, our lovely Customer Care team is here for you.

Opening hours:

Monday – Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 8am to 1pm

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Your hydration tracker



Use this hydration tracker to monitor the amount of fluids drank each day

Example



Colour in each cup for the amount drank throughout a day. You can colour in a quarter of a cup, half or full cup.

Week 1 - Date: / /

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



Week 2 - Date: / /

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



It is recommended to have at least 6-8 cups or 1.8-2.4L of fluid per day. If you are drinking 8 cups per day, aim for approximately 225ml-300ml of fluid per cup/glass. This is intended to act as a guide and volume of fluid can be adjusted accordingly if opting for more or less cups.

Week 3 - Date: / /

Monday	       
Tuesday	       
Wednesday	       
Thursday	       
Friday	       
Saturday	       
Sunday	       

Week 4 - Date: / /

Monday	       
Tuesday	       
Wednesday	       
Thursday	       
Friday	       
Saturday	       
Sunday	       

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