



CommCare Corporation

Risks, Symptoms & Tips to Avoid Dehydration

Did you know...

Dehydration is often the root cause of hospitalizations for seniors, causing conditions like increased weakness that contribute to falls and fractures or urinary tract infections that lead to hospitalizations.

As we age, the water content of our bodies decreases. Dehydration is exacerbated when you add factors such as a lack of mobility or fine motor skills necessary to drink, intentionally restricting fluid intake because of incontinence or frequent restroom visits, or dementia causing individuals to forget to drink.

Symptoms of Dehydration

- Confusion & Weakness, (often among first symptoms)
- Dark urine
- Decreased skin elasticity
- Dry Skin
- Chapped lips
- Decreased urine output
- Sunken eyes
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Increased heart rate
- Constipation
- Dry, hard stool

8 Tips to Help Prevent Dehydration in Older Individuals

- Drink small amounts of fluids throughout the day
 - Some may need assistance getting a beverage or drinking.
 - Using squeeze bottles or straws can help those who have difficulty drinking from a cup.
 - Some may need frequent reminders or encouragement to drink.
- Drink five 8 ounce glasses of water per day.
- Avoid coffee, alcohol & high-protein drinks, especially in large quantities. These have a diuretic effect, or greater loss of body fluids
- Make it easy to drink by having a pitcher of ice water nearby with sliced lemons or oranges. Drink water, milk or juice with every meal. A favorite beverage like an Icee or Sonic Blast may encourage increased intake.
- Recognize the early warning signs like dizziness, thirst dark urine, headaches, dry mouth or cramping.
- Eat foods that have a high water content, like fresh fruits, vegetables, soups, popsicles or cereal with milk.
- Fear of incontinence may influence fluid intake. If so drink more during the day and limit intake before bed.
- Make it social! A regular visit over a glass of ice water becomes an event to anticipate and enjoy.

Risk Factors: for Dehydration

- Swallowing disorders caused by stroke, Parkinson's or dementia
- Difficulty with mobility or motor skills required for drinking
- Obesity
- Age 85 or older
- Bedridden
- Diarrhea, vomiting or excessive sweating
- Having 5 or more chronic diseases
- Taking 5 or more prescription medications
- Reduced fluid intake due to fear of incontinence