



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

A guide to following your fluid allowance in hospital



Adult
Therapies

The importance of managing your fluid intake

When your kidneys are not working properly your body may not be able to regulate the amount of water it contains. When fluid builds up within your body it is called “fluid overload” or “oedema”. Fluid overload can be harmful to your heart and lungs.

You may be prescribed medication called diuretics (or water tablets), or dialysis may be required to help remove the excess fluid from your body. Limiting the amount of fluid you drink is also part of the treatment.

Your daily fluid allowance is	ml
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What is included

All drinks must be included in your daily allowance e.g. tea, coffee, milk, fizzy pop, water, squash, juice and nutritional supplements.

Managing a fluid allowance on the ward

On the ward you will be provided with a water jug and be offered hot drinks 4-5 times per day. Below is an example of how to manage a 1000ml (1 litre) fluid allowance:

- 500ml (1/2 a litre) water in your water jug
- Four half teacups of tea/coffee per day (4 x 90ml)
- 100ml milk on cereal
- ▶ Total = 960ml

To help keep track of your fluid intake, a fluid balance chart is used to record your intake of drinks/fluids taken each day.

You, your family/carers or the nursing staff can fill the chart in. If you are helping to keep the record, you can use the pictures below as a guide as to the sizes of drinks served in hospital. It is important to be as accurate as possible.

		
<p>1 teacup = 180ml</p>	<p>1 Mug = 220ml</p>	<p>Usually filled to 500ml. Ask staff how much fluid is in your jug</p>
		
<p>1 Glass = 220ml</p>	<p>1 Beaker = 220ml</p>	<p>1 Plastic cup = 150ml</p>
<p>Laminated copies of this picture guide are available on the ward. Please ask the nursing staff if you would like one during your stay in hospital.</p>		

Drinks from a shop will have the amount of fluid they contain printed on the packaging (e.g. cartons, bottles and cans of drink). Those from cafes may not, but you can ask at the counter if they have any information on the size of drinks served.

Food and fluid

Some foods contain a lot of fluid so must also be included in your daily fluid allowance.

Examples include:

Food	Advice Suggestion
Gravy	The usual portion is approximately 90ml. You may want to limit the amount that you add to your meal or avoid this altogether.
Soup	Limit to a small bowl (this will be approximately 100ml of fluid), or avoid altogether as it is high in salt and will make you thirsty.
Milk	Remember to include any milk in your fluid allowance. A small covering of milk on your cereal will be approximately 100ml
Other	Fruit juice is optional as a starter on the menu. If you choose to have this, it is approximately 85ml.

Foods such as cooked pasta or rice, fruit and vegetables do not need to be included in your fluid allowance as they do not contain large amounts of fluid.

Tips to manage your fluid allowance:

- Try to drink only when thirsty rather than out of habit
- Try using a smaller cup or drinking only half cups
- Drink between meals rather than at meal times
- Sharp sweets like sherbet lemons, mints or chewing gum may stimulate saliva production
- Undertake regular mouthcare, such as teeth cleaning or rinsing with mouthwash
- Always check with the nursing staff how much fluid you have been given in your water jug. This should be approximately 500ml
- If you have diabetes, high blood sugars can increase your thirst. Discuss your diabetic control with the nursing or medical staff if you are concerned

Reducing your salt intake

Having a diet high in salt can make you thirsty which may make it harder for you to manage your fluid allowance. Reducing your salt intake is recommended to help you manage your thirst and may also be beneficial for your blood pressure.

Tips to reduce your salt intake:

- Avoid adding extra salt and sauces to your food. Pepper and vinegar can be used freely
- Limit your choice of salty foods to one per day e.g. cheese, ham, gammon, bacon, pies and sausage rolls
- Avoid salty snacks e.g. crisps, salted nuts, pretzels

When choosing from the hospital menu you may wish to choose the options coded with a heart ♥ which indicates healthy eating options that are lower in salt. Alternatively, You can also ask to speak to a dietitian who will be able to give you more guidance on the salt content of the hospital menu.

If you are struggling to manage your fluid allowance and would like more support ask the medical or nursing staff to refer you to a dietitian.

Personal Notes

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If you have any queries please contact:

Dietitian

Contact number

If you have any suggestions or comments regarding this leaflet please let your dietitian know.

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