

KEY TIPS ON HYDRATION

FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL
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ARE YOU AWARE OF THEIR INCREASED RISK OF DEHYDRATION?



The EFSA adult recommendations for the daily intake of water from all sources* (water, beverages and food) do not fall with age under conditions of moderate environmental temperature and moderate physical activity levels. But age-related changes can lead to an increased risk of dehydration with consequent effects on health and wellness.

 **2.5 L for men**

 **2 L for women**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ELDERLY

- People usually drink in response to thirst, but by the age of 60, if people only drink when they are thirsty, they may not get as much water as they need.
- Renal concentrating capacity generally declines with the age, leading to an increased loss of water via urine.
- Diminished appetite and poor food choices may lead to a reduction of fluid intake from food.
- Some older adults may suffer from poor memory, immobility, or illness which may affect fluid intake. In addition, certain medications can also block the thirst mechanism.
- Dehydration can cause serious problems in older adults. Elderly people are at greatest risk of dehydration and its potentially life-threatening consequences: People aged between 85-99 years are 6 times more likely to be hospitalised for dehydration than those aged 65-69 years.
- Chronic dehydration constitutes a serious problem and is associated with an increased risk of falls, urinary tract infections, dental disease, bronchopulmonary disorders, kidney stones, constipation, and impaired cognitive function.

HOW TO ENSURE PROPER HYDRATION IN THE ELDERLY



These are practical tips to help keep elderly people well hydrated

- A hydration programme should include advice on drinking, offering fluids at mealtime and in between meals. Fluids should be readily available and physically accessible both day and night.
- Carers should be familiar with dietary changes so that appropriate hydration recommendations can be made.
- Environmental temperatures inside should be moderate. In hot environments, it is recommended that intake of liquids be increased by 250 mL for each degree centigrade over 37°C.
- Strong (distilled) alcoholic beverages may provoke dehydration and are not recommended.
- Many types of foods contain a substantial amount of water. If an older person finds it difficult to increase the amount of fluid drunk, increasing the intake of foods, such as soups or fruit and vegetables, which typically contain 80-90 per cent water, can help to maintain an adequate water intake as well as being good sources of essential nutrients.
- Varying flavours and even colours can improve palatability of beverages offered and can help facilitate adequate hydration.

The Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)* issued reference intakes for water in 2010. These are defined as total water intake, which is water from beverages (including drinking water) and from food moisture. It is normally assumed that the contribution of food to total dietary water intake is 20 to 30%, while 70 to 80% is provided by beverages. This relationship is not fixed and depends on the type of beverage and on the choice of foods.

To know more about the sources of water, please visit us at:
http://www.europeanhydrationinstitute.org/nutrition_and_beverages.html

* Source: EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition, and Allergies (NDA); Scientific Opinion on Dietary reference values for water. EFSA Journal 2010; 8(3):1459. Available online: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1459.htm>