

Fluids and Your Kidney Diet

Your kidneys remove extra fluid from your body. If your kidneys are not working properly, extra fluid can build up around your ankles, eyes, hands, or in your lungs. Your heart will have to work harder to push all the extra fluid through your body. This will increase your blood pressure and can cause heart failure.

You may need to limit the fluid you drink to avoid extra fluid in your body. Cutting back on salt and dialyzing regularly can also help keep your fluids in balance. Your doctor, dietitian, or nurse will help you decide how much fluid is safe for you.

What are fluids?

Anything that is liquid at room temperature counts as a fluid. Some fluids are:

- all drinks
- juice from canned fruit
- gelatin desserts
- ice cream
- sherbet
- frozen pops
- crushed ice and ice cubes
- soup
- sauces and gravies
- coffee and tea

Tips to keep your fluids in balance

- Talk to your dietitian or healthcare team about eating less sodium. Use less salt from the salt shaker, and don't eat packaged or processed foods with a lot of salt or sodium.
- Keeping track of your weight helps you and your healthcare provider know if you are retaining fluid. On hemodialysis, a weight gain of 2–3 kg (4.5–6.5 lbs) between treatments is all right for most people.
- Have your blood pressure measured often. Know what your usual blood pressure is.
- Limit fluids to 2–4 cups (500–1000 mL) of fluid plus the amount of urine your kidneys make each day.

A daily limit of 2–4 cups (500–1000 mL) plus urine output may not be right for everyone. As soon as you are able, talk to your doctor, dietitian, or nurse about how much fluid is best for you.

It's just as important to have enough fluid as it is to reduce fluid when you need to.

Have no more than _____ mL or _____ cups in 24 hours.

How do I know if I am drinking a safe amount of fluid each day?

The right amount of fluid is different for everyone. It will depend on your:

- weight gains
- blood pressure
- urine volume
- activity level

Your doctor, nurse, or dietitian will work with you to decide how much fluid is safe for you.

Tell your doctor, nurse, or dietitian if you have any of the symptoms below:

Over hydration:

- swelling in your face, arms, legs, or ankles
- sudden increase in weight
- high blood pressure
- shortness of breath
- trouble breathing
- muscle cramping (for people on dialysis)
- headaches

Dehydration:

- low blood pressure (hypotension)
- muscle cramping
- weight loss
- dizziness
- headaches

Tips to avoid drinking too many fluids

- Spread your fluids throughout the day, over your meals and snacks.
- Drink only when you're thirsty.
- If possible, take your pills with mealtime liquids or take them with soft foods such as applesauce.
- Drink from a small glass or cup.
- Drain liquid from canned fruit.
- Freeze some of your fluids into ice cubes. Frozen fluids last longer but still count towards your fluid intake.
- Control blood sugars if you have diabetes.

Salt can make you thirsty

- Don't add salt to foods when cooking and at the table.
- Look for packaged or processed foods that are lower in salt.
- Ask your dietitian for more tips on cutting back on salt.

If you have a dry mouth

- Brush and floss your teeth more often. Rinse your mouth with chilled mouthwash that is not alcohol-based.
- Use a cold air humidifier, especially at night.
- Breathe through your nose, not your mouth.
- Suck on sugar-free hard sour candies, strong breath mints, lemon wedges, or chew sugar-free gum.
- Suck on frozen fruits such as cherries, grapes, strawberries, peaches, and pineapple.
- Spray your mouth with one of the mixtures listed below. Use a small spray bottle.



Lemon spray:

- ½ cup (125 mL) lemon juice
- ½ cup (125 mL) water

Mix the ingredients in a spray bottle and use as needed. Store in refrigerator.

Mint spray:

- 1 tsp (5 mL) peppermint extract
- 1 cup (250 mL) water

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle and use as needed. Store in refrigerator.

Keeping track of your fluid

Use one of the 2 methods below to track how much fluid you drink each day. You can talk to your dietitian about which method may be best for you.

1. Fill an empty bottle:

- Using water, measure the total amount of fluid you are allowed for the day. Pour this amount into an empty 2 litre pop bottle.
- Mark a line on the bottle to show the water level. **This is how much fluid you can have each day.**
- Pour the measured water out, and start with an empty container.
- Every time you drink fluids, pour the same amount of water into the bottle.
- Stop drinking when the water gets to the marked line.**
- Repeat steps a, c, and d every day.



- ### 2. Measure how much fluid your drinking glasses, tea or coffee cups, and soup bowls hold.
- Fill them with water, then pour the water into a measuring cup.
 - Using those measures, track all the fluid you take in on your recording sheet.

Measuring fluids

- 1 ounce (oz) = 30 mL
- ½ cup = 4 oz = 125 mL
- 1 cup = 8 oz = 250 mL
- 1 liter = 4 cups = 32 oz = 1000 mL

Some examples:

- ½ cup gelatin dessert = ½ cup fluid
- 1 cup ice = ½ cup fluid