

Restricting Fluid

You have been asked to limit (restrict) the amount of fluid you drink every day. You can still have drinks that you enjoy, but now you need to keep track of the amount you drink. This is called a *fluid restriction*. The information in this handout will help you to manage your fluid restriction.

Your doctor may change your fluid restriction over time depending on your weight, results of your blood tests, or whether you have extra fluid under your skin (edema). Edema looks like swelling or puffiness on your arms, hands, legs, or feet.

You can also have edema inside your body where you can't see it—around your stomach, or around your heart and lungs, which makes it hard to breathe.

Sudden weight gain can be a sign of edema. This might happen as quickly as overnight. Weight gain from fat or muscle happens slowly, over weeks or months.

How much fluid can I have each day?

Have no more than _____ cups or _____ mL every day (24 hours).

Are you making choices to manage your fluid restriction?

Answer the questions below to help you decide if you're drinking too much fluid.

Every *Yes* answer means you have a habit that can make your fluid restriction easier. If you answer *No* to any of these questions, and you're ready to make healthy changes, use the tips on the following pages to increase your *Yes* answers.

1. When you drink, do you sip instead of gulp?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Do you eat fruits and vegetables instead of drinking juice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Do you make most of your meals at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Do you know what to do if you have dry mouth?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Is your weight the same from day to day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Do you have a plan to limit your fluid intake when you're away from home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Do you know how to track how much you drink in a day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Do you try to limit salt (sodium) in your foods and drinks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

How do I keep track of the fluid that I eat or drink?

Write down how much fluid you drink each day using the fluid tracking record at the end of this handout. Bring your tracking record to your next doctor or dietitian visit to discuss how your fluid restriction is working.

Tracking your fluid:

1. Get an empty 2 litre pop bottle, some measuring cups, and a pen.
2. Into the empty pop bottle, pour water equal to the amount of fluid you are allowed in a day.

3. Mark the water line on the bottle.



4. There are 2 ways to track your fluids:

- a. Every time you drink fluids, **pour the same amount of water out of the bottle you marked.**

Stop drinking fluids when the bottle is empty.



OR

- b. Every time you drink fluids, **add the same amount of water to the empty bottle you marked.**

Stop drinking fluids when the bottle is filled to the line.



Cups and mL

You might need to change between cups and mL. The chart on the next page can help you do this.

Which foods and drinks do I count as part of my fluid intake?

You need to keep track of any food that is a liquid at room temperature. Circle any food or drinks in the lists below that you consume.

Drinks:

- water
- milk
- juice
- pop
- coffee, tea
- hot chocolate
- soy and rice beverage
- fruit and crystal drinks
- milkshakes, eggnog
- alcoholic drinks (hard liquor, beer, wine, liqueurs)
- slushes
- sports drinks
- canned fruit syrup or juice
- cream and non-dairy coffee whiteners
- liquid nutritional supplements
- any drink thickened to help with swallowing problems
- broth

Foods that count as fluid:

One half cup (125 mL) of the foods below is the same as one half cup (125 mL) of fluid.

- ice cream
- sherbet
- sauces and gravies
- jelly dessert
- all soups
- frozen pops
- Ice counts as fluid. Melt one ice cube from your freezer and measure the melted fluid. Most ice cubes are 1–2 Tbsp (15–30 mL) of fluid.
- When crushed, 1 cup (250 mL) of ice equals about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (150 mL) of fluid.

You don't need to count:

- Grains cooked in water, like pasta or rice
- Oil, melted butter, or margarine
- Pudding
- Yogurt

How can I avoid drinking too much fluid?

Below are some tips to help you limit the fluid you drink. Ask your dietitian which tips are right for you.

- Use less salt from the salt shaker, and don't eat foods that have a lot of salt or sodium in them.
- Sip fluids slowly.
- Drink only when you're thirsty, from a small glass or cup.
- Spray water from a spray bottle into your mouth to keep it moist.
- Take your pills with yogurt or applesauce instead of water.
- Drain liquid from canned fruit.*
- Control blood sugars if you have diabetes.

Tips for when your mouth is dry:

- Suck on sugar-free hard sour candies.
- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Brush and floss your teeth more often to keep them clean.
- Use a lip balm to keep lips from drying out.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist for products that help with dry mouth.
- Use a cold air humidifier, especially at night.
- Suck on a few ice chips or a sugar-free frozen pop.

Try these foods to help with a dry mouth:

- frozen fruits (such as grapes, strawberries, peaches, or pineapple chunks)*
- crunchy vegetables and fruit like celery, cucumber, green peppers, or apples*

*If you have kidney problems, choose fruit and vegetables low in potassium such as those listed above. Ask your dietitian which fruits and vegetables you should choose.

Tips for when you're away from home:

- For special occasions only, save up your daily fluid limit and drink most of it at the event.
- Sip on one drink for most of the event.
- Use a frosted glass or reusable ice cubes instead of using ice.

Changing between cups and mL

The chart below can help you change fluid amounts from cups to mL or from mL to cups.

Cups	→	mL
¼ cup	→	60 mL
½ cup	→	125 mL
1 cup	→	250 mL
4 cups	→	1000 mL or 1 Litre
1 fluid ounce	→	30 mL
1 quart	→	1000 mL or 1 Litre
1 gallon	→	4000 mL or 4 litres

Tracking your weight

Keeping track of your weight helps you and your healthcare provider know if you are retaining fluid.

- Weigh yourself at the same time every day after emptying your bladder and before eating.
- Wear the same type of clothing every time you weigh, or wear no clothing.
- Record your weight every day. On the next page, there is an example of a weight and fluid tracker you can use.



Tell your healthcare team if you have a sudden increase in weight. This could mean your body is retaining fluids. Your healthcare team will tell you what to do.

Weight and fluid tracking record

Every day, use a table like the ones below to track how much fluid you are drinking and your weight. You can make a table in a notebook, on paper, on a computer, or in your phone.

Bring this record to your next appointment.

My fluid restriction is _____

Date	Fluid drank in cups or mL	Body weight

Date	Fluid drank in cups or mL	Body weight