



FlexiLearnHub

Knowledge Hub

Professional Resources for Care, Catering & Hospitality

FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Care Home Resident Hydration Monitoring Guide

A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff

Knowledge Hub Resource 013

Version 1.0

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Part of the FlexiLearnHub Professional Knowledge Lib

About This Resource

Purpose

Maintaining good hydration is essential for supporting health, wellbeing and quality of life in care settings. This guide has been developed to help care staff recognise the importance of hydration, understand who may be at increased risk of dehydration, and promote good daily hydration practices through awareness and observation.

This resource is intended as a practical awareness guide to support good care. It should always be used alongside your organisation's policies, individual care plans, risk assessments and local procedures.

Suitable For

This resource is suitable for:

- Residential Care Homes
 - Nursing Homes
 - Dementia Care Services
 - Supported Living Services
 - Home Care & Domiciliary Care
 - Rehabilitation & Intermediate Care Services
 - Hospitality and Catering Teams working within Care Settings
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Why Hydration Matters

Water is essential for every system within the body. Maintaining adequate hydration helps to:

- Regulate body temperature.
- Support healthy kidney function.
- Maintain healthy skin and tissues.
- Aid digestion and reduce the risk of constipation.
- Support concentration and cognitive function.
- Help maintain blood pressure and circulation.
- Promote overall health, comfort and wellbeing.

Older adults and vulnerable individuals may be at greater risk of dehydration due to age-related changes, underlying medical conditions, reduced mobility, cognitive impairment or difficulty recognising or communicating thirst.

Important Information

This guide provides awareness information only and does not replace professional training, clinical assessment or organisational policies. Always follow individual care plans, clinical guidance and local procedures when supporting residents with hydration needs or reporting concerns.

Continue Learning

To develop your knowledge further, explore our **Nutrition & Hydration in Care Settings** training course at:

www.flexilearnhub.com

Recognising the Signs of Dehydration

Early recognition of dehydration can help prevent more serious health problems. Care staff should remain observant and report any concerns promptly in accordance with their organisation's policies and the individual's care plan.

Common Early Signs

Be aware of changes such as:

- Feeling thirsty or requesting drinks more frequently.
- Dry mouth, lips or tongue.
- Reduced urine output or dark-coloured urine.
- Headaches.
- Tiredness or lack of energy.
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded.
- Dry skin.
- Constipation.
- Poor appetite.

Signs That Require Prompt Attention

Some people, particularly older adults, may not recognise or communicate that they are becoming dehydrated. Staff should be alert for changes including:

- Increased confusion or unusual behaviour.
- Increased drowsiness.
- Weakness or unsteadiness.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Reduced mobility.
- Refusal of food or drinks.
- Signs of illness that may affect fluid intake.

Always report any concerns promptly to the appropriate senior member of staff and follow local reporting procedures.

Who May Be at Greater Risk?

Residents who may require additional observation include:

- Older adults.
 - People living with dementia.
 - Individuals with swallowing difficulties (dysphagia).
 - Residents who require assistance with eating and drinking.
 - Individuals recovering from illness or infection.
 - People experiencing vomiting or diarrhoea.
 - Residents taking medications that may increase fluid loss, where identified within their care plan.
 - Individuals who may forget to drink independently.
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Good Practice Reminder

- ✓ Encourage regular drinks throughout the day.
- ✓ Observe changes in normal drinking habits.
- ✓ Record fluid intake where required.
- ✓ Report concerns promptly.
- ✓ Always follow the individual's care plan and organisational procedures.

Encouraging Good Hydration in Care Settings

Supporting residents to maintain good hydration is an important part of providing high-quality, person-centred care. Small, consistent actions throughout the day can make a significant difference to an individual's health, comfort and wellbeing.

Simple Ways to Encourage Fluid Intake

Care staff can help by:

- Offering drinks regularly throughout the day rather than waiting for residents to ask.
 - Providing a choice of hot and cold drinks based on personal preference.
 - Making drinks easily accessible whenever appropriate.
 - Encouraging residents to drink during meals and between meals.
 - Offering drinks little and often if large drinks are not well tolerated.
 - Respecting individual routines, cultural preferences and personal choices.
 - Providing assistance where required in accordance with the individual's care plan.
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Creating a Positive Drinking Environment

Residents are often more likely to drink when:

- Drinks are served at an appropriate temperature.
- Cups, mugs or glasses are suitable for their needs.
- The environment is calm and comfortable.
- Staff provide encouragement in a friendly and respectful manner.
- Drinks are presented attractively and are easy to reach.

Monitoring Hydration

Where required by the individual's care plan or local procedures, staff should:

- Observe daily drinking habits.
- Record fluid intake accurately.
- Report significant reductions in fluid intake.
- Monitor for any changes in health or behaviour that may indicate dehydration.
- Communicate concerns promptly to senior staff.

Supporting Residents with Additional Needs

Some residents may require additional support to maintain adequate hydration, including those living with dementia, reduced mobility or swallowing difficulties.

Where a resident has an assessed swallowing difficulty (dysphagia), always provide food and drinks in accordance with their prescribed care plan and any recommendations made by the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team. Never alter food or drink textures unless authorised to do so.

Remember

Good hydration is not achieved by encouraging residents to drink more on a single occasion. It is supported through regular observation, consistent encouragement and person-centred care throughout each day.

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Key Hydration Good Practice Checklist

Maintaining good hydration is everyone's responsibility. Consistent observation, effective communication and person-centred support all contribute to keeping residents healthy, comfortable and safe.

Daily Good Practice

Use this checklist as a simple reminder during everyday care.

- ✓ Offer drinks regularly throughout the day.
- ✓ Encourage residents to drink little and often where appropriate.
- ✓ Respect individual preferences for drinks, temperature and serving style.
- ✓ Ensure drinks are within easy reach whenever possible.
- ✓ Observe for any changes in drinking habits.
- ✓ Monitor for signs of dehydration.
- ✓ Record fluid intake where required by the individual's care plan.
- ✓ Report concerns promptly to the appropriate senior member of staff.
- ✓ Follow individual care plans and organisational procedures at all times.
- ✓ Support residents with dignity, patience and encouragement.

Remember

Good hydration supports:

- Healthy kidney function
- Normal digestion
- Comfort and wellbeing
- Concentration and alertness
- Reduced risk of dehydration-related illness
- Better overall quality of life

Every positive interaction with a resident provides an opportunity to encourage safe and appropriate fluid intake.

Further Professional Learning

Continue developing your knowledge with our CPD-accredited and CQC-aligned online training courses, including:

- Nutrition & Hydration in Care Settings
- Dysphagia Awareness & IDDSI Framework Training
- Dementia Awareness
- Infection Prevention & Control
- Health & Safety in Care Settings
- End of Life Care Awareness
- Safeguarding Adults Awareness

Visit:

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to explore our growing range of professional online training courses and free Knowledge Hub resources.



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