



FlexiLearnHub

Knowledge Hub

Professional Resources for Care, Catering & Hospitality

FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Preventing Dehydration in Care Settings

A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff

Knowledge Hub Resource 007

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About This Resource

Preventing Dehydration in Care Settings

A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff

Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Person-Centred Care

Maintaining good hydration is essential for health and wellbeing. In care settings, some individuals may be at an increased risk of dehydration due to age, medical conditions, reduced mobility or difficulties with eating and drinking. Care staff play an important role in encouraging regular fluid intake, observing for changes and supporting individuals in accordance with their documented care plans.

This guide has been developed by **FlexiLearnHub** to provide professional awareness of the importance of hydration in care settings. It complements workplace training and should be used alongside organisational policies, documented care plans and guidance from appropriately qualified healthcare professionals.

Purpose of this Resource

This guide has been designed to help readers:

- ✓ Understand why hydration is important for health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Recognise factors that may increase the risk of dehydration.
- ✓ Appreciate the role of care staff in encouraging regular fluid intake.
- ✓ Understand the importance of observation and reporting.
- ✓ Promote safe, person-centred hydration support.

Suitable For

- Care Assistants
- Senior Carers
- Nurses
- Care Home Managers
- Support Workers
- Healthcare Assistants
- Catering Teams
- Family Carers

Important Information

This guide provides professional awareness only. Care staff should always follow the individual's documented care plan, organisational policies and procedures when supporting hydration. Any concerns about an individual's health or hydration should be reported promptly in accordance with local procedures.

Continue Learning

Expand your knowledge through the **FlexiLearnHub Nutrition & Hydration in Care Settings (CPD Accredited)** course, along with our growing range of professional awareness guides and CQC-aligned online training.

Visit:

www.flexilearnhub.com

Why Hydration Matters

The Importance of Staying Hydrated

Water is essential for the body to function properly. Good hydration supports overall health and wellbeing, helping individuals remain comfortable, alert and able to carry out everyday activities.

In care settings, encouraging regular fluid intake is an important part of person-centred care and can contribute to an individual's comfort and quality of life.

Who May Be at Greater Risk?

Some individuals may have an increased risk of dehydration due to factors such as:

- Older age.
- Certain medical conditions.
- Reduced mobility.
- Reduced appetite or fluid intake.
- Memory or cognitive impairment.
- Difficulties with eating or drinking.

Every individual's needs are different, so care staff should always follow the documented care plan and organisational procedures.

Why Hydration Is Important

Good hydration helps support:

-  Normal body functions.
 -  General health and wellbeing.
 -  Comfort, alertness and concentration.
 -  Enjoyment of meals and drinks.
 -  A better quality of life.
-

Good Practice

Care staff should:

- ✓ Encourage regular opportunities to drink throughout the day.
 - ✓ Offer a variety of suitable drinks where appropriate.
 - ✓ Respect individual preferences and choices.
 - ✓ Follow the individual's documented care plan.
 - ✓ Work with colleagues to provide consistent support.
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Remember

Good hydration is an important part of everyday care. Encouraging regular fluid intake and following agreed care plans helps support health, wellbeing and person-centred care.

Good Practice Reminder

Supporting hydration means promoting:

 **Health**

 **Wellbeing**

 **Comfort**

 **Choice**

 **Person-Centred Care**

Recognising Possible Signs of Dehydration

The Importance of Observation

Care staff are often well placed to notice changes in an individual's usual appearance, behaviour or wellbeing. While recognising possible signs of dehydration is important, care staff should always follow organisational procedures and report any concerns promptly to the appropriate person.

Observations should always be considered alongside the individual's documented care plan and overall health needs.

Possible Signs That May Need Reporting

Care staff may notice changes such as:

- Reduced interest in drinking.
- Dry lips or a dry mouth.
- Darker urine than usual.
- Increased tiredness or lethargy.
- Confusion or changes in usual behaviour.
- Complaints of feeling thirsty.

These observations do not necessarily mean an individual is dehydrated, but they should be reported in accordance with local procedures and the individual's care plan.

Why Early Reporting Matters

Promptly sharing concerns allows the wider care team to review the individual's needs and take any appropriate action.

Good communication between care staff, nurses, managers, catering teams and healthcare professionals helps ensure individuals receive safe, person-centred support.

Good Practice

Care staff should always:

- ✓ Remain observant throughout the day.
 - ✓ Encourage regular opportunities to drink where appropriate.
 - ✓ Report concerns promptly using agreed procedures.
 - ✓ Record relevant observations where required.
 - ✓ Continue following the individual's documented care plan.
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Remember

Care staff are not expected to diagnose dehydration. Their role is to observe, encourage hydration in line with the care plan and report any concerns promptly through the appropriate channels.

Good Practice Reminder

Excellent hydration support includes:

 **Observation**

 **Encouragement**

 **Communication**

 **Accurate Recording**

 **Teamwork**

Promoting Good Hydration Every Day

Encouraging Regular Fluid Intake

Good hydration is supported through everyday care and attention. Offering regular opportunities to drink, respecting personal preferences and creating a positive mealtime environment can help individuals maintain healthy fluid intake.

Every person's needs and preferences are different, so care staff should always follow the individual's documented care plan and any agreed hydration support strategies.

Simple Ways to Encourage Hydration

Good practice may include:

- ✓ Offering drinks regularly throughout the day.
 - ✓ Providing a choice of suitable hot and cold drinks.
 - ✓ Encouraging drinks during meals and between meals.
 - ✓ Respecting individual preferences and cultural choices.
 - ✓ Ensuring drinks are easily accessible where appropriate.
 - ✓ Working with colleagues to provide consistent hydration support.
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Making Hydration Part of Daily Care

Hydration should be considered throughout the day rather than only at mealtimes.

Small, regular opportunities to enjoy drinks can help make hydration feel like a normal and enjoyable part of everyday life while supporting comfort and wellbeing.

Good Practice

Care staff should always:

- ✓ Follow the individual's documented care plan.
 - ✓ Encourage fluids in a respectful and person-centred way.
 - ✓ Remain observant and report any concerns.
 - ✓ Work with colleagues to promote consistent care.
 - ✓ Support dignity, choice and independence wherever possible.
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Remember

Encouraging good hydration is part of everyday person-centred care. Small actions, offered consistently and respectfully, can make a positive difference to an individual's comfort, wellbeing and quality of life.

Good Practice Reminder

Promoting good hydration supports:

 **Health**

 **Wellbeing**

 **Comfort**

 **Choice**

 **Quality of Life**

Working Together

Supporting hydration is a shared responsibility. Care staff, catering teams, nurses, managers and healthcare professionals all contribute to encouraging healthy fluid intake and creating a positive care environment.

By working together and communicating effectively, care teams help ensure individuals receive consistent, high-quality support every day.

Continue Your Learning

Continuing Professional Development

Good hydration is an essential part of delivering high-quality care. By encouraging regular fluid intake, remaining observant and following agreed care plans, care staff help promote health, comfort and wellbeing for those they support.

Continuing professional development helps care teams build confidence, improve everyday practice and deliver safe, person-centred care.

Continue Your Learning with FlexiLearnHub

Expand your knowledge through our growing range of CPD-accredited and CQC-aligned online training courses, including:

- ✓ Nutrition & Hydration in Care Settings
- ✓ Dysphagia Awareness & the IDDSI Framework
- ✓ Advanced IDDSI Level 4 Professional Purée Presentation & Plating
- ✓ Food Safety & Hygiene Level 2
- ✓ HACCP Level 2
- ✓ Infection Prevention & Control
- ✓ Dementia Awareness
- ✓ End of Life Care Awareness

Designed to support continuous professional development, workplace compliance and excellence in care and catering.

Related Knowledge Hub Resources

Continue exploring the **FlexiLearnHub Knowledge Hub**, including:

Nutrition & Hydration Resources

Resource 007

Preventing Dehydration in Care Settings – A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff

Dysphagia & IDDSI Awareness Series

Resource 002 – Understanding the IDDSI Framework

Resource 003 – Recognising the Signs of Dysphagia

Resource 004 – Supporting Safe Mealtimes for People with Dysphagia

Resource 005 – Texture-Modified Food Awareness

Resource 006 – Helping Someone Eat and Drink Safely

Our Knowledge Hub continues to grow with free professional resources designed to support best practice across the care, catering and hospitality sectors.

Visit FlexiLearnHub

Explore our free professional resources and CPD-accredited online training at:

www.flexilearnhub.com

About FlexiLearnHub

FlexiLearnHub provides professional online training, downloadable workplace resources and practical awareness guides for the care, catering and hospitality sectors.

Our mission is to make high-quality learning accessible, practical and affordable while supporting safer workplaces, continuous professional development and excellence in care.



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