



Managing Your Fluid Intake

Helpful information for persons receiving dialysis treatments

Renal Dietitians

a dietetic practice group of the
eat right. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Introduction

If you are on dialysis, watching your fluid intake is just as important as watching what you eat.

Healthy kidneys remove wastes from your bloodstream and ALSO extra fluid from your body. Because your kidneys are not working well, they may not be removing the extra fluid.

If too much fluid builds up in your body while on dialysis, you **may** develop the symptoms listed to the right. Some people do not feel any of these symptoms, but the *large fluid gains can strain the heart*. Fluid gains of 5% or more of your body weight increase your risk of heart damage and death.

Limiting your fluid intake will help you avoid these symptoms and decrease your risk of heart damage and death. It will also help you to feel better when less fluid has to be removed from your body during your dialysis treatments.

Symptoms of Fluid Build-up

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Cramping
- High blood pressure
- Damage to your heart
- Swelling (especially around your legs and ankles)

Tracking Fluids

●●● Write down how many ounces of fluid you are drinking to help you keep track.



When you begin dialysis treatments, you will need to begin limiting your daily fluid intake at mealtimes and between meals, especially if your kidneys make less urine.

If you make a small amount of urine, your fluid intake should be **no more than 48 ounces** (6 cups) per day.

But, **if you make no urine**, drink **only 32 ounces** (4 cups) of fluid each day.

To feel your best, try not to gain more than 4-6 pounds (2-3 kilograms) between dialysis treatments. This includes over the weekend.

Fluids

A fluid is any liquid or anything that melts. These are a few foods and beverages that count as fluid:

- Water
- Milk and milk substitutes
- Juices
- Coffee and tea
- Soft drinks
- Alcoholic beverages
- Soups and broths
- Nutritional liquid supplements
- Yogurt
- Pudding
- Custard
- Gelatin (Jello)
- Smoothies
- Ice chips and cubes
- Popsicles
- Ices and snow cones
- Ice cream, frozen yogurt, and sherbet

If you have questions about your fluid limit, please check with your renal dietitian.

Measuring Fluids

The following information may help you measure and record your daily fluid intake:

Portion	Fluid Volume
1 mug	6 fluid ounces / $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
1 cup	8 fluid ounces / 1 cup
1 glass	8 fluid ounces / 1 cup
1 can	12 fluid ounces / 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
1 pint	16 fluid ounces / 2 cups
1 quart	32 fluid ounces / 4 cups
1 liter	33-34 fluid ounces / 4 cups

●●● Measure to be certain how much fluid your favorite mug, cup, or glass holds.



It is slightly more difficult to know how much fluid is in frozen and semi-solid foods. The following list is an easy way to estimate the fluid in various foods:

Food	Portion	Fluid Volume
Gelatin	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	4 fluid ounces
Yogurt	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fluid ounces
Pudding or custard	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	3 fluid ounces
Congeaed salad	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	3 fluid ounces
Popsicle	1 twin bar	3 fluid ounces
Fruit ice bar	3 oz. bar	3 fluid ounces
Ice cream or sherbet	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ fluid ounces
Frozen yogurt	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	3 fluid ounces

Tips to Control Your Thirst

Dry mouth or thirst can make it hard to limit fluid intake. The following tips may help:



- Avoid salty or spicy foods that tend to increase your thirst.
- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Suck on sugar-free hard candy.
- Suck on frozen grapes, strawberries, pineapple, blueberries or sliced peaches.
- Use a breath spray (found in the mouthwash section of your store).
- Drink ice water instead of carbonated sodas to better quench your thirst.
- Take medications with your mealtime liquids instead of between meals.
- Use a room humidifier or vaporizer to help moisten the air you breathe.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood glucose between 80-130 before meals and below 180 two hours after meals to help reduce your thirst.

Final Suggestions

Limiting your fluid intake is a good habit to get into because:

- ✓ You will have less swelling, particularly in your legs and around your ankles.
- ✓ Your blood pressure will be more easily controlled.
- ✓ You will find it easier to breathe, especially when you are lying down.
- ✓ You will not be as thirsty when you finish your dialysis treatments.
- ✓ Your dialysis treatments will be more comfortable and you will have less muscle cramping.
- ✓ You will have more energy after dialysis treatments.
- ✓ You will reduce stress on your health and lessen your risk of death.