

# PROVIDING FLUIDS



Drinking is important for staying healthy. A healthy diet is likely to improve a person's quality of life. People with dementia may become dehydrated if they are unable to communicate or recognize that they are thirsty, or if they forget to drink.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Increased confusion or a change in usual behavior are the first signs that someone with dementia may be dehydrated. Additional behavior changes associated with inadequate fluid intake include weakness, fatigue, agitation, muscle cramping in the arms and legs, nausea and dizziness. Changes in urination such as infrequent urination and/or dark amber or strong smelling urine can also signal dehydration.

## CHALLENGES

Dehydration can lead to headaches, increased confusion, urinary tract infection and constipation. It is important to note that dehydration increases the risk of a urinary tract infection, which can cause an acute phase of confusion. These can make the symptoms of dementia worse.

## SOLUTIONS

- Leave beverages out in visible areas as a reminder to drink
- Use a special glass and make a toast throughout the day
- Provide a “happy hour” before mealtime with non-alcoholic drinks
- Serve popsicles, gelatin and other water-filled treats
- Incorporate fluids into activities
- Offer a glass of water when you enter a room or after the use of the bathroom
- Have a juice cart and go room to room offering drinks
- Offer them other drinks besides plain water such as: Coffee, tea, fruit juice, sweetened beverages, fruits, and vegetable juices
- Experiment to find out if they prefer hot or cold drinks
- Try enticing them with smoothies, milkshakes, Ensure, or sports drinks. Sometimes they will like the flavor or texture and be willing to drink these beverages
- Serve fruits and vegetables with high water content

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WITH HIGH WATER CONTENT

- |                  |                |                        |
|------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| • Cucumbers      | • Peaches      | • Squash               |
| • Lettuce        | • Pears        | • Tomatoes             |
| • Celery         | • Blackberries | • Bell peppers         |
| • Watermelon     | • Papayas      | • Asparagus            |
| • Grapefruit     | • Nectarines   | • Portobello mushrooms |
| • Strawberries   | • Pineapples   | • Cabbage              |
| • Cantaloupe     | • Plums        | • Cauliflower          |
| • Honeydew melon | • Oranges      | • Turnip               |
| • Lemons         | • Zucchini     |                        |

Sometimes ensuring that individuals with dementia get enough liquid in their diet just requires a little creativity.