

# My Hydration Plan

Your helpful guide to  
staying hydrated



# What is HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT?

Hydrate To Feel Great is a 4-week hydration plan which has been developed to help older people to drink more. This resource isn't suitable for everyone (for example, anyone using a catheter or a fluid restricted diet). Its use should be under the guidance of a healthcare professional. Please let your healthcare professional know if your health changes.

## Why focus on hydration in over 65s?

- As we get older, our sense of thirst becomes less reliable.
- Use of medications such as diuretics and laxatives can increase fluid losses.
- Changes that occur as we age increase the risk of dehydration which in turn increases the risk of UTIs.
- People over 65 suffer more serious consequences of UTIs and are more likely to require antibiotics.
- People over 65 make up the majority of UTI related hospital admissions.

### How will Hydrate To Feel Great help me?

This booklet summarises the benefits of good hydration, and the risks associated with poor hydration. There is a guide to help you work out what you are drinking currently, and a 4-week drinks diary so you can log your fluid intake while you complete the plan.

## Does HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT actually help people to drink more?

**467**

people have trialled the Hydrate To Feel Great plan

**71%**

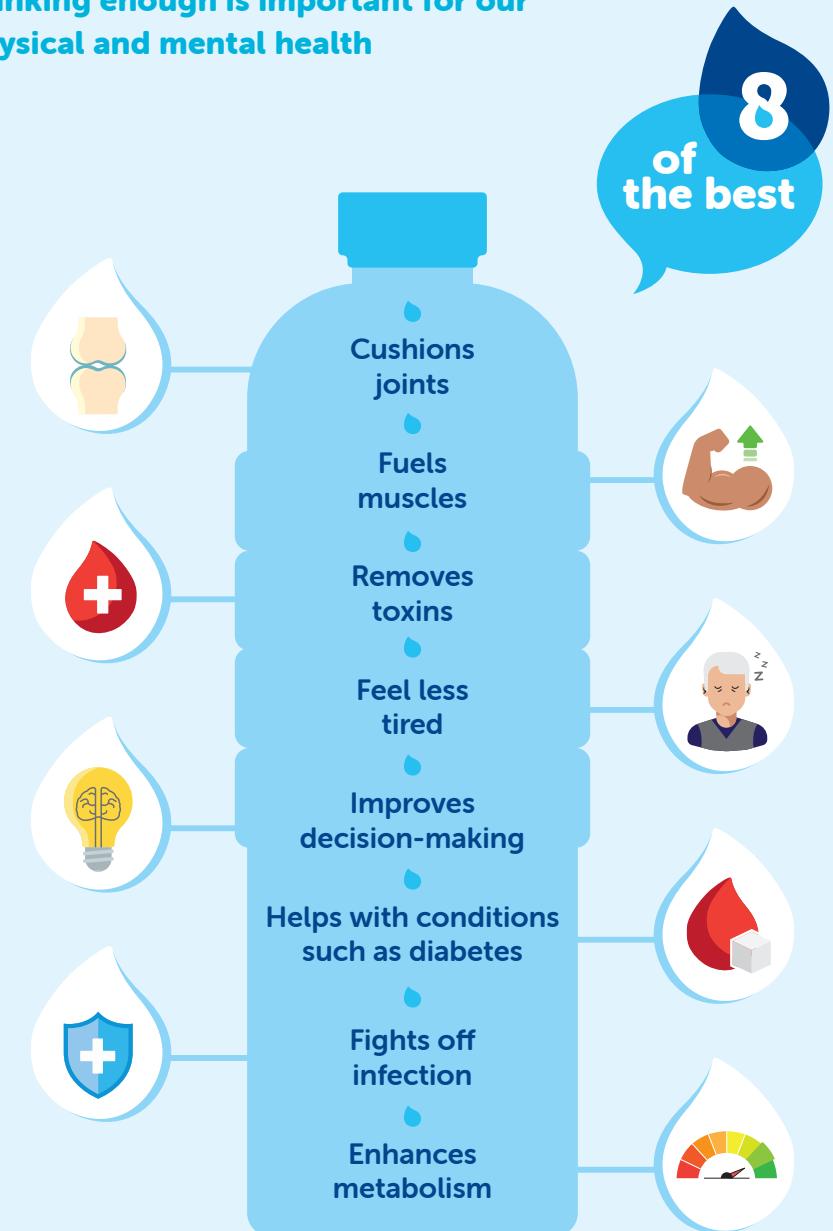
of people were drinking more by the end of the plan

**9/10**

on average patients rated their experience as 9/10

# Eight benefits of good hydration

Drinking enough is important for our physical and mental health



# Why is hydration important?

Our bodies use water for almost everything, from digesting food to keeping our joints supple and our minds sharp.

Just like we care for our plants and pets, we need to care for ourselves by keeping our bodies topped up with water.

In the same way you wouldn't let your plants dry out and drop their leaves, it's important you stay hydrated yourself. Don't wait until you're wilting before you have a drink.

## How much should I drink?

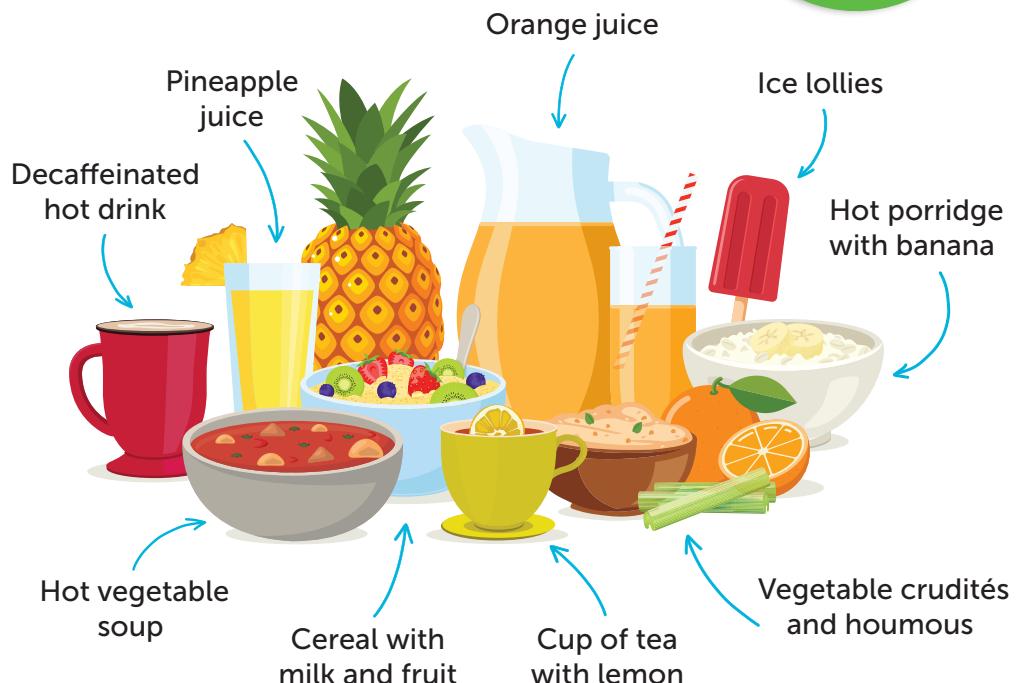
As a rough guide, we should all be having 6 - 8 drinks a day to keep our bodies and minds working at their best (unless you've been advised differently by your doctor). 6 - 8 drinks a day is roughly 2 litres or 3.5 pints.

When you're doing more activity than normal, or if the weather is hot, it's a good idea to add in extra drinks or alternatives such as ice lollies.

# Hydration doesn't just mean drinking water

## Ideas for hydrating drinks and snacks

It's not just about water!



# What does 2 litres look like?

2 litres may sound like a lot, but when we break it down, it quickly adds up. Here's an example of how a typical day might look:



Milk on your cereal  
150ml



Breakfast cup of coffee  
150ml



A handful of cucumber slices  
100ml



Fruit juice with lunch  
200ml



2 half pint glasses of water  
570ml



1 slice of watermelon  
80ml



3 mugs of tea during the day  
750ml

= 2 litres  
(3.5 pints)

## How do I spot dehydration?

The effects of dehydration are often mild but can be life threatening if we don't get our fluids back up.

Peeing less frequently



Dark urine



Feeling dizzy or lightheaded



Dry mouth, lips and tongue



Feeling tired or confused



Sunken, dry eyes



Feeling thirsty



Headache



Constipation



Dry, fragile skin



These symptoms can also be indicators of other health conditions, but it's good to rule out dehydration by having regular drinks throughout the day.

**The two main causes of dehydration are:**

- Not drinking enough
- Sudden or unexpected fluid loss, such as sickness (vomiting) or diarrhoea

Seek help from a healthcare professional if you are persistently unwell with sickness or diarrhoea and you can't keep yourself hydrated.

You can call 111, visit your community pharmacy or contact your GP practice.

## How do I avoid dehydration?

**The easiest way to avoid dehydration is to make regular drinks a part of your routine**

- Drink regularly, throughout the day.
- It's much easier to increase your fluid intake when you are including drinks you like - you don't have to only drink water!
- Try different flavours of sugar free squash or herbal tea.
- Think about small, realistic changes you can make to your existing routine.
- Enjoy food such as soup, tinned fruit in juice and fresh fruit and vegetables to help boost your fluid intake at meals and snack times.
- If you are making yourself a hot drink, have a small glass of water while you wait for the kettle to boil.



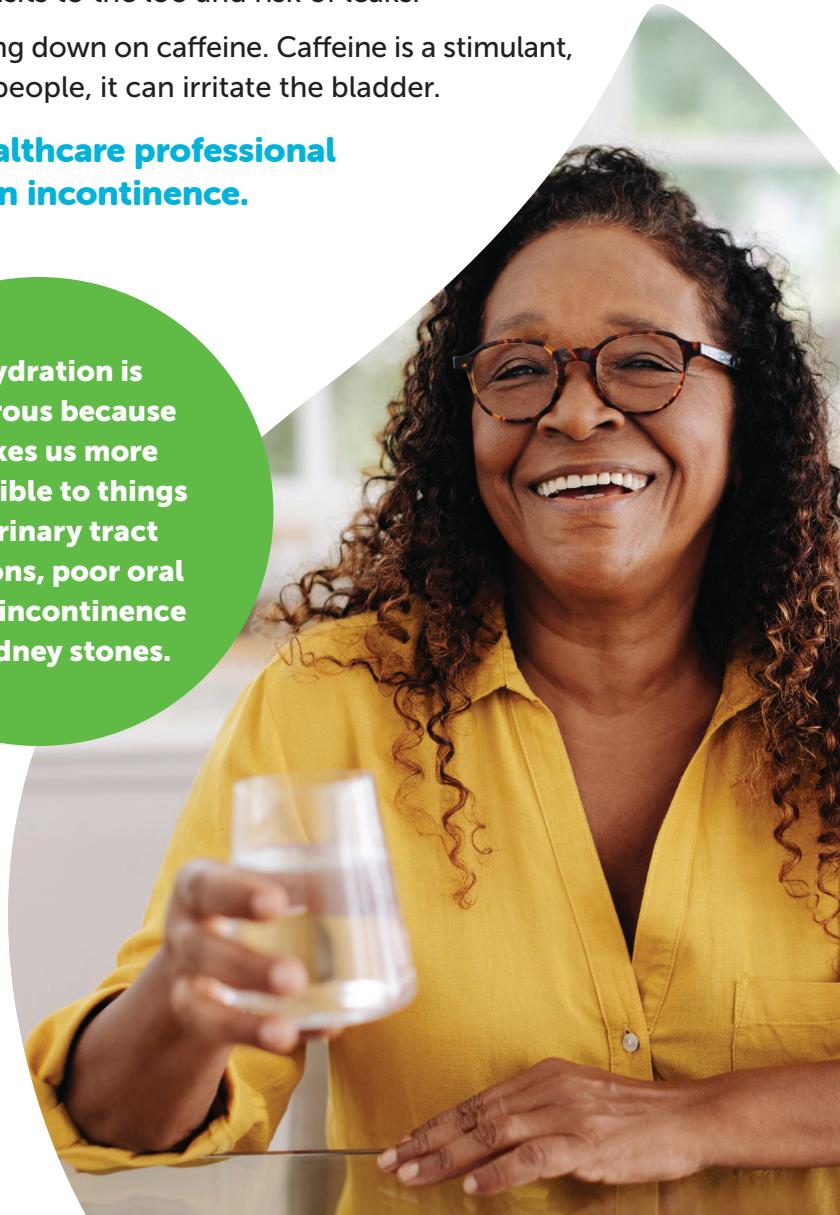
## What about incontinence and/or increased frequency of urination?

If, like many people, this is a concern, it might seem logical to cut back on fluids. But, drinking less makes urine more concentrated, which can irritate the bladder resulting in more urgent visits to the loo and risk of leaks.

Consider cutting down on caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant, and for some people, it can irritate the bladder.

**Talk to a healthcare professional for advice on incontinence.**

**Dehydration is dangerous because it makes us more susceptible to things like urinary tract infections, poor oral health, incontinence and kidney stones.**



## How much do you normally drink?

Record what you would drink on a typical day. Any time the word 'drink' is used in this booklet, it refers to non-alcoholic drinks.

You might find it beneficial to be aware of how much alcohol you drink but please don't record that as part of the drinks diary.

If you don't drink enough water when you have alcohol you can become dehydrated quickly.



Time	I would normally drink
Before breakfast	
Breakfast	
Mid morning	
Lunch	
Mid afternoon	
Dinner	
Evening	
During night	
<b>Total for a day</b>	

# Recording your drinks

## Option 1: Counting drinks

The drinks diary in My Hydration Plan has been designed with simplicity in mind. Therefore, we only ask you to count and compare the number of drinks you have each day.

Record each drink by marking a tick for the time you had the drink. Simply add up the number of ticks in each row to give you a total number of drinks for that day.

### For example

	Day of the week	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Evening	TOTAL
Day 1:	Wednesday	✓	✓		✓	3
Day 2:	Thursday	✓✓	✓✓	✓		5
Day 3:	Friday	✓		✓	✓✓	4

Have you noticed:	Less	Normal	More
Headaches	✓		
Constipation	✓		
Energy levels			✓
Ability to focus			✓

### What has worked well this week?

I noticed where there were gaps when I hadn't had a drink.

### What has been challenging this week?

Very busy weekend.

### Any other notes

Will try to have a drink before breakfast everyday.

**You may prefer to keep a more detailed record. If this is the case, please follow the instructions opposite to measure your fluid intake in millilitres.**



# Recording your drinks

## Option 2: Measuring in millilitres

1. What do you normally drink from? You may have a mug for hot drinks and a glass for cold drinks. Fill your favourite drinks containers with the typical amount of fluid they hold.



Tea cup  
150ml



Mug  
250ml



Glass  
260ml

2. Tip that liquid into a measuring jug. Note in your drinks diary how much liquid your cup / glass / mug holds.
3. Count your drinks, noting which container you drank from.
4. Multiply that number by the number of millilitres that container holds.

### For example

	Day of the week	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	TOTAL
Day 1:	Wednesday	1 cup, 1 mug	1 glass	2 glasses	1180ml
Day 2:	Thursday	2 glasses	2 mugs	1 glass	1280ml
Day 3:	Friday	2 cups	2 glasses	2 glasses	1340ml

### I normally drink from a bottle

Note in your drinks diary how much liquid your bottle holds.

At the end of each day, multiply the number of times you have finished your bottle by the number of millilitres your bottle holds.

750ml bottle x 3 refills = 2250ml



# Week 1

Start date: .....

HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT

Day of the week	Before breakfast	Breakfast	Mid morning	Lunch	Mid afternoon	Dinner	Evening	During night	TOTAL
Day 1:									
Day 2:									
Day 3:									
Day 4:									
Day 5:									
Day 6:									
Day 7:									

Have you noticed:	Less	Normal	More
Headaches			
Constipation			
Energy levels			
Ability to focus			

What has worked well this week?

What has been challenging this week?

Any other notes

## Week 2

Start date: .....

HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT

Day of the week	Before breakfast	Breakfast	Mid morning	Lunch	Mid afternoon	Dinner	Evening	During night	TOTAL
Day 1:									
Day 2:									
Day 3:									
Day 4:									
Day 5:									
Day 6:									
Day 7:									

Have you noticed:	Less	Normal	More
Headaches			
Constipation			
Energy levels			
Ability to focus			

What has worked well this week?

What has been challenging this week?

Any other notes

## Week 3

Start date: .....

HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT

Day of the week	Before breakfast	Breakfast	Mid morning	Lunch	Mid afternoon	Dinner	Evening	During night	TOTAL
Day 1:									
Day 2:									
Day 3:									
Day 4:									
Day 5:									
Day 6:									
Day 7:									

Have you noticed:	Less	Normal	More
Headaches			
Constipation			
Energy levels			
Ability to focus			

What has worked well this week?

What has been challenging this week?

Any other notes

## Week 4

Start date: .....

HYDRATE TO FEEL GREAT

Day of the week	Before breakfast	Breakfast	Mid morning	Lunch	Mid afternoon	Dinner	Evening	During night	TOTAL
Day 1:									
Day 2:									
Day 3:									
Day 4:									
Day 5:									
Day 6:									
Day 7:									

Have you noticed:	Less	Normal	More
Headaches			
Constipation			
Energy levels			
Ability to focus			

What has worked well this week?

What has been challenging this week?

Any other notes

**This booklet was provided by:**

**Phone number:**



## **Thirsty for knowledge?**



For further information on Hydrate to Feel Great, including a useful film to guide you through this booklet:

[www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/hydration](http://www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/hydration)

For more advice on dehydration:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration)

For advice on incontinence and Urinary tract infections:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence)

**Sussex  
Health&Care**

**Frimley Health and Care**



**SURREY  
HEARTLANDS**  
Health and Care Partnership

With thanks to the NHS South West 'Don't wait...DRINK 8' health initiative.

# Top tips

Use this  
tab as a page  
marker for your  
drinks diary

## Tea break

Making a brew? Have a small glass of water while you're waiting for the kettle to boil.

## Taking medication?

Have a full glass of water when taking medication.

## Wake up to water

Keep a bottle of water next to your bed, to drink when you wake up.

**HYDRATE  
TO FEEL  
GREAT**

# Congratulations on completing 'My Hydration Plan'

Hopefully you have found the experience beneficial. If so, perhaps you have friends or family that you can talk to about Hydrate To Feel Great.

You could share what you have learned about hydration with the people you care about.

It can be easier to maintain positive changes with support and encouragement.

## What's next?

Changes, even ones we know are beneficial, can be hard to maintain. This might be a good time to think about what would help you to keep going with the positive changes you have made.

If you forget or can't manage to drink much for one or two days don't be too hard on yourself – just try again the next day.

## Would you like to carry on recording your drinks?

If you want more copies of the drinks diary, please contact the healthcare provider who issued this booklet.