

Practical tips for encouraging water consumption



- 1 Start by encouraging your team to develop a policy on how residents will receive adequate hydration. Refer to standard **2.10 Nutrition and hydration**.
- 2 A positive approach often helps to encourage older people to drink more fluids. For example, phrases such as 'Here is some nice cool refreshing water for you' is more productive than 'Do you want something to drink?'
- 3 An ideal time to offer water is when giving older people their medications.
- 4 Always provide a glass of water alongside coffee, tea or alcohol.
- 5 Older people often worry about increased toilet visits overnight. To avoid this problem, distribute 1500mL fluids evenly throughout the day to reduce the number of late evening drinks.
- 6 Older people can lose their thirst response and taste sensation. Never assume that they know when to drink.
- 7 Where possible inform family and friends about the importance of promoting hydration.
- 8 For day trips and for use in outside areas, providing a personal water bottle can help. These are easy to carry, to clean and to refill, and can be marked clearly with the person's name.
- 9 Hot water with a piece of fruit such as lemon, lime or orange, can appeal to those who want a hot drink.
- 10 Introduce older people to a variety of herbal teas as an alternative to plain water.
- 11 As the weather gets warmer encourage and remind older people to drink more. Perspiration increases in warmer weather. Extra fluids may need to be offered overnight.
- 12 Offer and encourage fluids during a meal times. Make sure that older people who are less able are assisted to drink.
- 13 Use a symbol such as a water drop near those who are at specific risk and need their water intake monitored. Make sure staff are aware of the symbol and its meaning.

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