

SALT AND FLUID MANAGEMENT

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Dialysis patients need to be very careful about their salt intake as this can lead to thirst which leads to larger fluid intake.

Fluid overload can result in breathlessness, swelling, high blood pressure and eventually over time, enlargement of the heart and heart failure.

QUESTION:

What are the side effects of dialysis treatment when fluid overloaded?



ANSWER:

You may experience a sudden drop in blood pressure resulting in feeling dizzy, faint, tired and nauseous. You may also experience headaches and muscle cramps. This is due to the large amount of fluid needed to be removed during the dialysis session.

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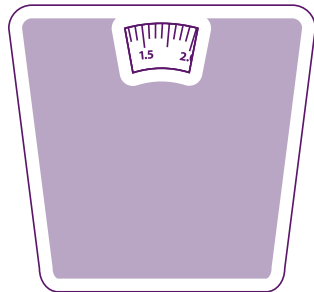


For haemodialysis patients, it is recommended that you do not gain more than 1.5–2kgs should be gained in-between dialysis sessions.

Excessive weight gain between dialysis sessions means that you may need to cut back on your salt and water intake. If you have diabetes, ensure that you do not have high blood sugars as too much glucose in the blood will also make you thirsty and drink more.

QUESTION:

What is your dry weight (sometimes referred to as your target weight)?



ANSWER:

Your dry weight is your body weight when you do not carry any excess fluid.

Your dry weight is your target weight after a dialysis treatment.

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Fluid can come from obvious sources (drinks) but also from foods with a high water content such as ice cream, custard, ice cubes and gravy .

Too much frequent fluid intake may result in longer dialysis sessions or more frequent dialysis.

QUESTION:

What counts as fluid?



ANSWER:

Any food that is liquid at room temperature will count towards your fluid intake. Examples are soup, milk, ice cream, ice lollies and ice cubes. Care also needs to be taken with other foods with a high water content. Examples of foods with a high water content include: watermelon, cucumber, grapes, and apples.

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Sodium is an important mineral that controls blood pressure.

1000mg of sodium = 2400mg of salt.

For patients on haemodialysis, sodium should be restricted to 1600–2000mg per day (depending on urine output).

QUESTION:

What are the side effects of fluid overload between dialysis treatments?



ANSWER:

An increase in blood volume increases blood pressure, which causes your heart to work harder which can lead to heart failure. Swelling may occur in your legs and feet, and it may become difficult to breathe.

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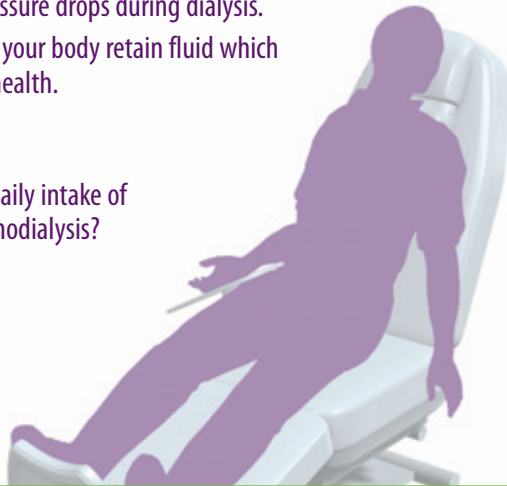


Controlling sodium intake will help to avoid large fluid gains, cramping and low blood pressure drops during dialysis.

Too much sodium will make your body retain fluid which can be detrimental to your health.

QUESTION:

What is the recommended daily intake of sodium for patients on haemodialysis?



ANSWER:
1600–2000mg per day.

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You should try to manage your sodium intake by:

- Looking at food labels to determine salt content
- Using spices, herbs and wine reductions to generate flavour
- Avoiding processed and preserved food
- Keeping a food diary to monitor any positive or negative side effects of your sodium-limited diet.

QUESTION:

Which foods should you avoid?



ANSWER:

Avoid foods high in salt. Check their labels to make sure you won't exceed your daily sodium intake if you eat them.

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You can manage your thirst by:

- Reducing your salt intake; salt stimulates thirst (if you are diabetic, glucose may have a similar effect)
- Distributing your fluid allowance throughout the day
- Keeping cool
- Sucking on an ice cube, slice of lemon or lime
- Chewing gum
- Sipping drinks slowly
- Snacking on frozen (low potassium, phosphate and sodium) fruits
- Rinsing your mouth out with water, or brushing your teeth.

QUESTION:

What are the effects of too much salt in your diet?



ANSWER:

Salt increases your thirst, blood pressure, and build-up of fluid. This can lead to swelling in your arms and legs, difficulty breathing as well as kidney and heart damage in the long-term. Your dialysis treatments will also be more uncomfortable if you are fluid overloaded. If you are diabetic it is important to control your blood sugar levels as this may also affect fluid intake.

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Managing your thirst in everyday situations doesn't have to be difficult.

If you eat at restaurants, ask the chef to prepare your meal without salt. Take short sips of your drink to make it last longer, and ask for a lemon slice and ice in your drink which you can suck on if you feel thirsty later. You can also ask for your glass not to be re-filled .

QUESTION:

How can you take pills and capsules without consuming too much fluid?



ANSWER:

Ask your doctor if you can take medication with meals. They may also prescribe drugs that cause thirst, so find out if they can prescribe alternatives. You only need a sip of water to swallow your medication, and tilting your head may help.

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The table below indicates fluid capacities of everyday items to help estimate your daily fluid intake.

Container	Fluid capacity (ml)
A mug	300
A glass	200
A small cup	150
A tablespoon	15
A small ice cube	15



QUESTION:

How is your daily fluid intake calculated?

ANSWER:

It is the amount of urine passed in a typical day in addition to 500–700ml of fluid.

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If you are on peritoneal dialysis (PD) you should be aware that your dialysis solution is high in glucose, which raises blood glucose levels and stimulates thirst. Therefore you should keep track of your fluid intake and the fluid which is removed after dialysis exchanges because you can still be at risk of fluid overload.

People with diabetes should avoid having high blood sugar levels as this can also make you thirsty .



QUESTION:

Why it is important for diabetic patients to maintain good blood glucose levels when trying to control fluid intake?

ANSWER:

High blood glucose levels will stimulate thirst and this increases the risk of fluid overload.

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