

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and Dehydration and Fluid Overload

With CKD, your kidneys may not be able to keep your body fluids balanced so you may become dehydrated. Dehydration can result from not drinking enough fluids during the day. You may experience dehydration if you have been sick due to vomiting, diarrhea and fever or as a result of certain medications.

Symptoms of Dehydration

- headache
- weight loss
- dizziness
- muscle cramping
- lower urine output
- concentrated urine
- low blood pressure (hypotension).

While these symptoms may be common to people with CKD, everyone responds differently. Listen to your body and be aware of any changes.

Things You Should Do:

- If you are dehydrated and have an access such as a fistula or graft, your access may become clotted. It is important for you to check it frequently for a thrill or buzzing sensation. If it is absent, contact your kidney health care provider immediately for further instructions.
- Report any flu-like symptoms or ongoing diarrhea to your health care team.
- If you are dizzy, you may have low blood pressure.
 - Relax and lie down for 5 minutes.
 - Sit up slowly to prevent further dizziness.
 - Take your blood pressure. If it is low, you should have something to drink.
 - If dizziness continues, contact your health care team for further instructions.
 - If you are alone and dizzy, call a family member or a friend to assist you
 - If you still do not feel well, call your health care provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

When kidneys lose function, they are not able to remove extra fluids from the body which causes you to retain fluid. If you retain a lot of fluid, you may become fluid overloaded. If that happens, fluid and salt (sodium) may need to be restricted.

Signs and Symptoms of Fluid Overload:

- arm, leg, or ankle swelling
- swelling around the eyes
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- shortness of breath
- coughing
- weight gain.

If any of the above symptoms becomes extreme, it requires immediate attention. Call your health care provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Things You Should Do:

- Follow your fluid and diet recommendations carefully, especially salt restriction.
- Drink the recommended amount of fluid suggested by your health care provider.
- If you find it difficult to catch your breath at any time, try to relax first. Sit in an upright position and attempt to take slow, deep breaths. If it is still difficult to breathe, call your health care provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Tips for Fluid Control if Your Fluid Intake is Restricted:

- Follow the fluid and dietary plan set up for you.
- Use small cups and glasses for drinks.
- Rinse your mouth with water - do not swallow.
- Anything that melts at room temperature is counted as fluid (such as ice cream, sherbet, and Jell-O™).
- Freeze some of your fluids into ice cubes (juice, water with added lemon), as iced fluids last longer.
- Freeze some of your fruits (cherries, strawberries) to suck on when you are thirsty.
- Moisten your mouth with hard candies and chewing gum.
- Avoid salty foods as they can make you thirsty.
- Take medications with mealtime liquids if possible.
- Monitor your blood pressure. Be aware of abnormal changes from your normal reading.
- Monitor your weight:
 - For CKD patients who do not require dialysis, your weight should remain close to what it usually is. If you notice that you have gained 1 to 2 kilograms (3 to 4 pounds) in a short period of time, contact the CKD program. If you have no symptoms of fluid overload, you may just be gaining body weight.
 - For hemodialysis patients, an acceptable weight gain between hemodialysis sessions is 1.5 to 2 kilograms (3 to 4 pounds).
 - For peritoneal dialysis patients, your daily weight gain should not be more than 1 to 2 kilograms (3 to 4 pounds) above your normal weight.

