



ESRD ALLIANCE | NETWORK 18

Fluid Management

Dear Fellow Kidney Patient:

Hello from the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network 18. SME is a fancy way to say we are kidney patients just like you, who volunteer to represent and help fellow patients in Southern California.

We want to talk to you about a very important topic: fluid management.

When your kidneys are normal, they remove fluid wastes from your body in the form of urine. When your kidneys don't work, dialysis is needed to remove these fluids. Since dialysis does not work as effectively as normal kidneys, it may be necessary to limit the amount of fluid you drink and *eat* between treatments. Your doctor determines how much fluid you can take in between treatments based on your “dry weight,” or how much you weigh after a normal dialysis treatment. This “dry weight goal” is very important, because overloading your body with excess fluid is extremely bad for your heart and lungs. It can cause headaches, breathing difficulties, and can contribute to cramping during dialysis.

Staying as close as possible to your “dry weight goal” between treatments is critical in maintaining your health. The more fluids you drink, the more time you may need to spend on dialysis to remove the excess and return you to your prescribed dry weight. Remember, liquids are not the only fluids you take in; foods that melt at room temperature are also considered to be fluids.

Controlling your fluid intake can be challenging, but we know you can do it. On the back of this page you will find ten tips to help you manage your fluids on a daily basis. Following these tips will help to improve your well-being. Please remember to always consult your dialysis treatment team before making any changes to your diet, fluid intake, or treatment plan.

Sincerely,

The Subject Matter Experts of ESRD Network 18



ESRD Network 18 of Southern California

10 Tips for Fluid Management

- 1** Everything counts! Ice, juice, fruits, and soups (just to name a few). Fluids are everywhere.
- 2** Many of the foods you used to eat may contain fluids. Talk to your dietitian about your favorite foods to better understand how they fit into your fluid management plan.
- 3** Try taking medications with applesauce instead of water.
- 4** Freeze the amount of water you are allowed per day in a bottle and drink it as it melts.
- 5** For dry mouth, consider sucking on hard candy drops or lollipops. Both are available in sugar free options for those who need to control sugar intake.
- 6** Fill a small spray bottle with lemon or mint flavored water and spritz your mouth when it feels dry or to quench your thirst.
- 7** When having hot beverages use a tea cup instead of a large coffee mug. Measure how much fluid the cups you use often hold to know their true capacity.
- 8** Eat your meal first and drink afterwards. It is easy to fill up on a beverage when you are hungry.
- 9** Salt (sodium) makes you thirsty. Know what your sodium restrictions are. Learn to read labels so you track how much sodium is in the foods you are eating throughout the day.
- 10** If possible, eat at restaurants that prepare your meal after it's ordered so they can adjust the salt added. If the food is already prepared, always tell the waitperson, "No additional salt please."

