

Restricting Fluid

If you have been asked to limit (restrict) the amount of fluid you drink every day, this is called a **fluid restriction**. The information in this handout can help you to manage your fluid restriction.

You can still have drinks that you enjoy, but now you need to limit how much you drink.

How much fluid is right for me?

Have no more than _____ cups or _____ mL in 24 hours.

Your doctor may change your fluid restriction over time. This may depend on:

- your weight,
- results of your blood tests, or
- whether you have extra fluid under your skin.

How do I know if my body is holding on to extra fluid?

When your body holds on to extra fluid, it can look like swelling or puffiness on your arms, hands, legs, or feet. You can also have fluid around your belly, or around your heart and lungs, which makes it hard to breathe.

Sudden weight gain can be a sign your body is holding on to extra fluid. This might happen quickly, even overnight. This is different from weight gain from fat or muscle which happens slowly, over weeks or months.

Are you already making choices to manage your fluid restriction?

Check Yes or No for each item below.

Every Yes is a choice you are making that can help make your fluid restriction easier. If you're ready to make changes, use the tips on the following pages to increase your Yes answers.

1. I know how to track how much fluid I eat and drink each day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. I try to limit salt (sodium) in my foods and drinks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3. I make most of my meals at home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4. I sip instead of gulp when I drink.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. I know what to do if I have dry mouth.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6. I eat fruits and vegetables instead of drinking juice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7. I have a plan to limit fluids when I am away from home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8. I weigh myself each day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

How can I keep track of the fluid that I eat and drink?

Write down how much fluid you have each day. Try using the fluid tracking record at the end of this handout. Bring your fluid tracking record to your next doctor or dietitian visit to discuss how your fluid restriction is working.

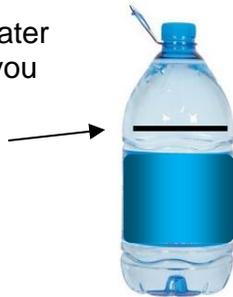
Tracking your fluid

There are different ways to track your fluids.

One option is to measure and write down how much fluid you eat or drink throughout the day.

Another option is the bottle method:

1. Get an empty 2 litre bottle, some measuring cups, and a pen.
2. Into the empty bottle, pour water equal to the amount of fluid you are allowed in a day.
3. Mark the water line on the bottle.
4. Pour the water out of the bottle.
5. Every time you have fluids, **add the same amount of water to the empty bottle you marked.**
6. Stop having fluids when the bottle is filled to the line.



Cups and milliliters (mL)

You might need to change between cups and mL. The chart on the next page can help you do this.

Which foods and drinks count as fluids?

You need to keep track of any food that is a liquid at room temperature. Circle any food or drinks in the lists below that you consume.

Drinks

- water
- milk
- juice
- pop
- coffee, tea
- hot chocolate
- soy and other plant-based beverages
- fruit drinks
- milkshakes, eggnog
- alcoholic drinks (hard liquor, beer, wine, liqueurs)
- slushes
- sports drinks
- juice or syrup from canned fruit
- cream and non-dairy coffee creamers
- nutrition supplement drinks
- drinks thickened to help with swallowing problems
- broth

Foods that count as fluid

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) of the foods below is the same as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) of fluid.

- ice cream
- jelly dessert
- frozen ice pops
- sherbet
- all soups
- sauces and gravies

Ice counts as fluid

- Melt one ice cube from your freezer and measure the melted fluid. Most ice cubes are 1–2 Tbsp (15–30 mL) of fluid.
- When crushed, 1 cup (250 mL) of ice equals about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (150 mL) of fluid.

Foods that don't count as fluid

- grains cooked in water, like pasta or rice
- oil, melted butter, or melted margarine
- pudding
- yogurt

How can I limit the fluid I eat and drink?

Below are some tips to help you limit fluid. Work with your dietitian to choose what works best for you.

- Cook and eat food without adding salt. Choose fresh, unprocessed, and homemade foods.
- Sip fluids slowly.
- Drink only when you're thirsty, from a small glass or cup.
- If possible, take your pills with mealtime liquids or take them with soft foods such as applesauce.
- Drain liquid from canned fruit.
- Manage blood sugars if you have diabetes.

Tips for when your mouth is dry

- Suck on sugar-free hard sour candies, strong breath mints, lemon wedges, or chew sugar-free gum.
- Brush and floss your teeth more often to keep them clean.
- Use a lip balm to keep lips from drying out.
- Ask your doctor, dentist, or pharmacist for products that help with dry mouth.
- Use a cold air humidifier, especially at night.
- Suck on a few ice chips or a sugar-free frozen ice pop.
- Try these foods to help with a dry mouth:
 - frozen fruits like grapes, strawberries, peaches, or pineapple chunks
 - crunchy vegetables and fruit like celery, cucumber, green peppers, or apples

If you have kidney problems, ask your dietitian which fruits and vegetables you should choose.

Tips for when you're away from home

- Sip on 1 drink when at an event.
- Use a frosted glass or reusable ice cubes instead of using ice.
- For special occasions, save up your daily fluid limit and drink most of it at the event.

Changing fluid amounts between cups and mL

The chart below can help you change fluid amounts from cups to mL or from mL to cups.

Cups	↔	mL
¼ cup	↔	60 mL
½ cup	↔	125 mL
1 cup	↔	250 mL
4 cups	↔	1000 mL or 1 Litre
1 fluid ounce	↔	30 mL
1 quart	↔	1000 mL or 1 Litre
1 gallon	↔	4000 mL or 4 Litres

Tracking your weight

Keeping track of your weight can help you and your healthcare provider know if your body is holding on to extra fluids.

- Weigh yourself at the same time every day after emptying your bladder and before eating.
- Wear the same type of clothing every time you weigh yourself or wear no clothing.
- Record your weight every day. On the next page, there is an example of a fluid and weight tracker you can use.



Tell your healthcare provider if you have a sudden increase in weight. This could mean your body is holding on to extra fluids. Your healthcare provider will work with you to develop a plan to manage the extra fluid.

For more support



- Talk to your healthcare provider.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.
- Visit ahs.ca/nutrition.
- Call, text, or chat with 211 Alberta (<https://ab.211.ca/>) to find out about financial benefits, programs, and services.

