

Kidney Disease: How to Control Your Fluids

Why do you need to control your fluids?

When you have chronic kidney disease, your kidneys have trouble getting rid of extra fluids. The extra fluid can raise your blood pressure and force your heart to work harder.

You can help your kidneys and your heart by watching how much fluid you drink each day and not taking in more than your body can handle.

You will probably also need to watch your sodium (salt) intake, which affects how much fluid your body holds onto.

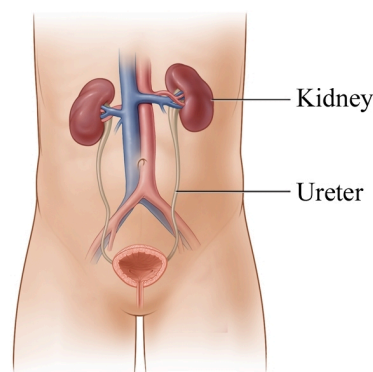
How much fluid is safe for you is based on the stage of your kidney disease and other health problems you may have.

You will need to work closely with your doctor or dietitian to figure out how much fluid you can have each day. Then, try not to go over that amount.

What counts as a fluid?

Fluids in your diet include:

- Anything you drink, such as water, milk, tea, coffee, soda, juice, and sports drinks.
- Foods that have a lot of liquid. Examples are gelatin dessert, soup, gravy, sauces, and some fruits and vegetables, such as grapes, melons, oranges, tomatoes, lettuce, and cucumbers.
- Foods that will melt, such as ice and ice cream.
- The liquid in canned fruits and vegetables. Count it as a fluid or drain well before serving.



- Alcohol. Check with your doctor about whether it is safe for you to drink alcohol. If you do drink alcohol, have no more than 1 drink a day.

How do you know if you have too much fluid in your diet?

You may be taking in more fluid than your body can handle if:

- You have swelling in your legs and ankles.
- You gain weight (more than 1 or 2 pounds) over a short period of time or between dialysis sessions.
- You are short of breath. This happens when fluid builds up around your lungs.

How do you measure fluids?

You may need to keep track of exactly how much fluid you drink. Here are a couple of ways to do this:

- Write down how much you drink every time you drink or eat something that counts as a fluid. This is an easy way to keep track

as long as you remember to do it every time. It may help to keep a notebook with you so that you always have a place to record how much you drink.

- Some people keep a container filled with the amount of fluid allowed for that day. If they drink from a source other than the container or eat a food that counts as a fluid, then they pour out that amount. When the container is empty, you know you have reached your fluid limit for the day.

Find a method that works for you. Any method is fine as long as it helps you know when you have reached your fluid limit for the day.

It is easy to measure liquids like water and

milk. Just measure the glass you drink out of. For foods that count as fluids, you may need to ask a dietitian for help on how to measure the fluid in them.

How to control your thirst while you are drinking less

- Spread your fluids over the day instead of drinking a lot at once.
- Chew gum, or suck on hard candy.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of the medicines you take can make your mouth dry or increase thirst. You may be able to take a different medicine that does not have these side effects.

Do you have any questions or concerns after reading this information? It's a good idea to write them down and take them to your next doctor visit.