

# Dementia Care: Hydration

## Learner Workbook



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Hydration is one of the most important parts of basic nutrition. Water assists our bodies by keeping our temperature normal, lubricating and cushioning joints, protecting spinal cord and other sensitive tissues, and it gets rid of waste through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements. It is our job to monitor that our residents are eating and drinking properly. There are various reasons why our residents may be discouraged from maintaining adequate hydration.

These reasons may include:

- Poor appetite due to medications taken
- Unpleasant odors in our dining room (such as incontinent odors)
- The resident does not like what is served
- We have the resident sitting at a table where tablemates are not compatible
- Not offering enough liquids

If a resident does not like what is being served, a good suggestion is to let the dining room staff know in order to offer different selections for residents to choose from.

### **Steps to Encourage Good Hydration**

There are steps we can take to encourage good hydration. If a resident is not drinking enough water, here is what you can do to help encourage the resident:

- Let your supervisor know
- Document according to your community policy
- Keep an eye on the resident's weight. Report weight gain or loss to the physician according to your community policy



## Dehydration

Getting enough water every day is necessary to stay healthy. As residents get older they are prone to become dehydrated and lose more water than they put back into their bodies. As a person gets older, he/she may have a decreased sense of thirst. There are common signs and symptoms of dehydration. As a caregiver it is important to be aware of these signs of dehydration to ensure your residents are receiving proper nutrition and hydration.

Signs may include:

- Sunken eyes
- Dry mouth
- Dry eyes
- Less active
- Less urine output
- Decreased turgor



It may be difficult to encourage your residents to consistently drink enough water. Not all residents like to drink water to stay hydrated. There are alternatives if the resident refuses to drink water throughout the day.

These alternatives may include:

- Juice
- Popsicles
- Melons and other fruits
- Broth
- Celery
- Non-caffeinated soda

Because caffeine pulls fluid out of the person's body, we would not recommend beverages like coffee and tea.

Speak to your supervisor if you feel a resident is not receiving enough fluid throughout the day. Always follow your community policies and your state regulations.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: DEMENTIA CARE-HYDRATION

**Joe is an 83 year old resident in your assisted living community who refuses to drink water throughout the day. Because it is vital that Joe stay hydrated, an alternative to keep Joe healthy would be to offer him:**

- A. Ice tea or coffee
- B. Watermelon or other fruit
- C. Broth soup
- D. Both B and C

**Explain your answer:**