

Fact Sheet

Hydration

Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders Center

Dehydration or not having adequate fluids in the body results in electrolyte imbalance. Electrolytes, including potassium and sodium, are important minerals required for proper body functioning. When these electrolytes are out of balance, you may experience sluggishness, fatigue, lightheadedness and/or headache. Inform your doctor or nurse if you're experiencing dry mouth or lightheadedness.

Most often, the first sign of dehydration is thirst. Some Parkinson's medications can also cause dry mouth or lightheadedness. Other causes of dehydration include vomiting, diarrhea, inadequate fluid intake, or exercising without replacing fluids lost through perspiration.

Parkinson's patients are prone to low blood pressure, so hydration is especially important. Make sure that you drink at least 6-8 glasses of water a day (unless you have cardiac problems) and have a glass of water before you take your morning PD medications.

The following tips will help you remain well-hydrated and may improve your daily functioning.

- **Avoid alcohol, caffeine, soda, and sugary fruit juices.** Caffeine and alcohol are diuretics, which increase fluid loss through urination.
- **Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid daily.** Begin drinking fluids at breakfast and continue through dinner and avoid fluids a few hours before lying down at night.
- **Bring a full water bottle with you when planning to be away from home and refill as needed.** If you don't like plain water, try a sugarless flavoring (such as Crystal Light) or a slice of lemon.
- **Gatorade and pedialyte.** These drinks are caffeine-free, contain electrolytes and are low in sugar. They are effective for hydration.

Use urine color to determine your hydration status.

- When you are well-hydrated, your urine will be light yellow.
- Dark yellow means you need more fluid.
- Clear means you are over-hydrated.

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