

# Tips to Limit Fluid Intake on Dialysis

*Restricting fluids is important for your health when on dialysis. Talk to your doctor about the fluid allowance that is safe for your body. Limiting fluids can be difficult, especially when you are feeling thirsty. These tips can help you stick to your fluid allowance.*

## Reduce salty & spicy food

- Salty and spicy foods can make you thirsty! Avoid salty foods, like fast food and canned foods.
- Read labels to check the amount of sodium. Aim for a ratio of 1:1 of calories to sodium. If a food has 500 calories, sodium should be 500 mg or less.
- Use fresh herbs, like parsley and rosemary, or salt-free seasonings (e.g., Mrs. Dash®) instead of salt to add flavor.



## Keep track

- Measure out your daily limit and mark it on your water bottle. Make a plan for how you will divide it over the day to pace yourself.
- Keep a diary of your fluids or record them on your phone with an app like H2Overload.
- Ask for help from parents to not bring tempting drinks (e.g., juice, soda) into the home.



## Watch out for hidden fluids

- Anything that melts counts as a fluid - like popsicles, ice-cream, jello, & soup. Some foods like watermelon are also high in fluids.
- Check packages for the number of ounces. Make sure to include these in your daily count.

## Stay cool

- If it's hot outside, stay cool by keeping a fan or A/C running or spraying yourself with water.
- Avoid the midday sun when it's at its hottest.
- Try drinking cold liquids instead of hot ones.



## Reduce dry mouth

- Try breath mints, sour hard candies, lemon wedges, sugar-free gum, or breath spray to keep your mouth moist.
- Cut down on caffeine, like coffee and tea, which can contribute to feelings of dry-mouth.
- When you're brushing your teeth, don't forget to also brush your tongue.
- Try special mouth wash and toothpaste formulated to reduce dry-mouth. Some patients find it helpful to chill their mouthwash. Artificial saliva can also be helpful.



## Get creative

- When you're feeling thirsty between meals, try sucking on frozen fruits, like grapes or berries. Sucking on ice can also sometimes feel more satisfying than liquids.
- Take your medicines during a meal or swallow them with applesauce instead of a liquid.
- Notice if you tend to drink more at certain times (for example, when you are feeling bored or stressed). Try strategies like distraction to shake up these patterns.
- Celebrate when you reach your fluid goals! Coordinate with family and friends to earn a special reward—go to the park, play a boardgame, or have a movie night.

