Controlling fluid intake

Why do I need to limit fluid?
Healthy kidneys remove extra fluid from the body. When the kidneys fail, dialysis can remove some of this fluid. But you also need to drink or eat less fluid.

My fluid allowance is _______ mL per day

What happens if I have too much fluid?
Too much fluid can cause:
- Swollen hands, face, feet and legs
- Increased blood pressure and more work for the heart. This can lead to a fast heartbeat
- Difficulty breathing and shortness of breath (due to fluid in your lungs)
- Nausea, headaches and muscle cramps
- After dialysis, low blood pressure and feeling “washed out”
- If you are on peritoneal dialysis (PD), too much fluid requires the use of stronger bags containing more glucose (sugar). Over time this will reduce the efficiency of the peritoneum and may lessen your term on PD. Extra glucose contains energy (kJ) which can also lead to unwanted weight gain.

Note: There is a difference between fluid weight and body weight (muscles, bones, body fat). Your body is 60-70% fluid. Weight changes due to fluid occur quickly, over a period of days. Changes in body weight occur more slowly, over weeks or months.

What should I count as fluid?
Fluid includes all drinks and any food that is liquid at room temperature:
- Water, soft drink, cordial, fruit juice
- Tea, coffee
- Milk, milkshakes, thick shakes
- Ice, iceblocks
- Soup
- Gravy, sauces
- Custard, ice-cream, yoghurt, cream, jelly
- Alcohol

Some foods count as fluids, too. For example:
- Porridge
- Rice, pasta, noodles
- Fruit

These foods contain large amounts of fluids. If you eat large serves of these foods, count these as part of your allowance.
What is the fluid content of foods?

- 1 ice cube = 15mL
- 1 tablespoon = 20mL
- 1 metric cup = 250mL (8oz)
- 1 litre = 1000mL = 1 kg in fluid weight

**Note:** Use measuring cups and jugs to accurately measure your fluid intake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ cup jelly or custard</td>
<td>100mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mug of tea or coffee</td>
<td>300mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 can of soft drink</td>
<td>375mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200g tub yoghurt</td>
<td>160mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 scoops of ice cream</td>
<td>40mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup cooked porridge</td>
<td>160mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup cooked rice or pasta</td>
<td>100mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 piece of fruit (apple)</td>
<td>80mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup melon</td>
<td>100mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbsp gravy/sauce</td>
<td>40mL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fluid content of common foods**

**Hints for your fluid control**

- Spread your fluid allowance over the day - don't drink it all at once!
- Stay cool by using a moist face washer from the fridge or freezer. Try and stay out of the heat.
- Drink from small cups rather than large, fill cups ½ full.
- Freeze some of your fluid allowance. Ice or iceblocks, sucked slowly, are better at quenching thirst.
- **Limit salt and salty foods as these make you thirsty.** Foods high in salt include processed meats, tinned foods, sauces, gravy, most take away foods.
- **Choose foods low in salt** - fruit, fresh vegetables, unprocessed meats, and “low salt” or “no added salt” foods. Look for sodium content less than 120 mg per 100g serve on the nutrition panel. Do not add salt at the table or in cooking.
- Try sucking mints, peppermints, a slice of lemon or chewing gum.
- Brush your teeth to freshen your mouth.
- Keep lips moist by using lip balm.

**How much fluid can I have?**

- How much fluid you can have differs from person to person depending on dialysis, urine output and kidney function. Your fluid allowance may also change over time.
- You need some extra fluid (500 - 700mL) due to loss through the lungs and skin - even more in hot weather.
- Aim for a weight gain of around **1.5 kg** between each dialysis.

Dietitian:_______________________
Phone number: _________________

This is a consensus document from Dietitian/ Nutritionists from the Nutrition Education Materials Online, "NEMO", team.
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