

Dehydration

Dehydration is more common in older adults, especially for those living in long-term care, who are weak, have dementia, or have long-term health problems. It is important for family, friends, and caregivers to know how to notice dehydration, especially in the mouth.

Dehydration can happen for different reasons.

- The feeling of thirst often decreases with age
- Some medications can change how much water is in the body
- Illnesses, like urinary tract infections, can cause pain and make people drink less



Follow your work rules on glove use.

Signs & Symptoms in Older Adults:

- Dry mouth and tongue
- Feeling less alert, tired, or confused
- Feeling dizzy or falling



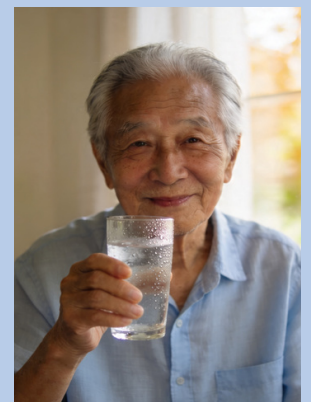
Seek Care If:

- A fever develops
- Speaking, eating, or drinking become difficult (e.g., coughing or choking)
- Liquids cannot stay down (e.g., vomiting, chronic diarrhea)
- Dehydration appears moderate to severe

Watch closely if taking medications or have health conditions that increase dehydration risk.

How to Stay Hydrated:

- Sip water throughout the day. Try to avoid sugary drinks between meals, as they can increase dental (tooth) decay
- Eat foods that have lots of water (e.g. watermelon, Jello, cucumber)
- Suck on ice chips if safe and approved by a care provider
- Use a cool-mist humidifier



Older adults who are dehydrated have a higher risk of falling, getting infections, constipation, weakness, tiredness, and going to the hospital.

The **risk of dehydration is higher in the summer**, especially during long periods of warm weather or heat waves.

