

Top Tips to help older people drink well



1) **Remember:** Routine tests for dehydration (such as dry mouth or skin, dark coloured urine) do not work in older people living in care homes, so offering drinks is generally the best way of preventing dehydration.



2) **Timing:** Offer lots of drinks earlier in the day, including one before breakfast, with breakfast, and two morning rounds of drinks.



3) **Frequency:** If using small cups, glasses or mugs, offer drinks more often and if drinks are not finished, offer more drinks more often.



4) **Avoid** missing drinks rounds and ensure all residents are offered drinks during each round.



5) **Encourage** drinking in a social, pleasant environment as it is more enjoyable.



6) **Variety:** Offer a variety of drinks, including hot milky drinks and fruit juice so drinking is more enjoyable. Offer foods high in fluid content such as soup, jellies or ice-lollies.



7) **Find out** resident's preferences for drinks types and presentation, and record in resident's individual hydration care plan. (Alcohol can be offered unless this is not advised.)



8) **Initiate:** Do not rely on residents asking for, or helping themselves to drinks, offer them.



9) **Medication:** Provide a generous drink with medications.



10) **Involve** all care home staff in promoting residents' hydration including activities coordinators, chefs and cooks.



11) **Offer help with going to the toilet:** This may be a reason for residents refusing drinks.