

# DEHYDRATION

DEHYDRATION means the body does not have as much water and fluids as it should. Dehydration occurs when the amount of fluid leaving the body is greater than the amount going back into the body.

## SOME FACTS about DEHYDRATION



- Approximately 60% of total body weight is water based.
- By the time an individual is thirsty, the body has already started the process of dehydration.
- For individuals with developmental disabilities and older individuals, the need to drink fluids may go unrecognized.

## RISK FACTORS (Causes)



Recognition of the following conditions will help alert you to potential risks:

- needing assistance with drinking
- unable to get drinks without help
- unable to communicate thirst to someone
- refusing food and fluid
- individuals who may drool or have fluid falling from their mouth
- any loss of body fluid: vomit, sweat, diarrhea
- medications such as diuretics that cause loss of fluid
- medical conditions such as kidney disease; where fluid loss can possibly cause dehydration

## WHAT to WATCH FOR



- dry skin
- dry mouth
- extreme thirst
- weakness
- light headed
- decreased urine
- dark colored urine
- feeling tired or less alert
- increase in smell of urine due to concentration

## WHAT TO DO



- **NOTIFY DOCTOR** to the possibility of dehydration
- **ASK HOW MUCH FLUID** the individual should have each day
- **FREQUENTLY OFFER FLUIDS** to individuals who have the ability to drink safely
- **IF REFUSING FLUIDS AND ABLE TO DRINK**, offer food items high in fluid content such as gelatin, watermelon, pudding, yogurt or ice cream
- **Certain individuals with heart or kidney disease** may need less fluid -- speak with their doctor for specific fluid intake requirements

## EMERGENCY

**If the individual is unable to take fluids safely, has extreme thirst, confusion, little or no urine output; notify the doctor immediately!**



THE DEHYDRATION FACT SHEET #1 is in a series of HEALTH INFORMATION FACT SHEETS compiled by the DDD Quality Assurance Unit. Fact Sheets #1-#4 are based on the "FATAL FOUR" as referred to by the Oregon Department of Health Services Developmental Disabilities Nursing Manual. Fact Sheets are available upon request and posted on the Division's Website: [https://www.azdes.gov/developmental\\_disabilities/](https://www.azdes.gov/developmental_disabilities/) (Click on "News & Events").

Issued April 2012

### State of Arizona • Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability.

The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program of activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible.

To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities ADA Coordinator at (602) 542-0419 or 1-866-229-5553 (Outside Maricopa County); TTY/TTD Services: 7-1-1.