Oral Rehydration Fluids
- Can be obtained from a pharmacy or supermarket
- Can be made at home by mixing together:
  - 1 litre of water
  - 6 level teaspoons of sugar / glucose powder
  - 1/2 level teaspoon of salt
  - 1/2 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
  - Cordial to taste

Take sips every few minutes until urine colour returns to a pale, clear yellow and you are feeling better.
If you have diabetes, renal or cardiac problems which restrict your fluid intake, talk to a pharmacist or STN

For the person with a stoma
If you are admitted to hospital because of an episode of diarrhoea leading to dehydration, ensure you contact your STN for an early appointment.

Disclaimer  The information in this brochure:
- has been developed as a general guide only
- relates to adults only
Any concerns need to be discussed with your STN or doctor

Prepared by the Australian Association of Stomal Therapy Nurses Inc. Education and Professional Development Subcommittee www.stomaltherapy.com

Reference:

Review due 2019
Level 1V Evidence (Expert Opinion)
General Information

It is important that you have a well-balanced diet and adequate fluid intake to maintain your body’s hydration balance ie fluids lost from the body = fluids taken into the body

Fluid losses: Urine Water vapour from breathing
Stool Sweat (visible and invisible)

Fluid gains: Drinks Foods

What is dehydration?
- A condition where fluids lost exceed fluids taken into the body
- Some essential salts will also be lost in these fluids
- Can be mild, moderate or severe (life-threatening)

Causes
- High temperatures
- Heat exposure
- Too much exercise
- Vomiting / diarrhoea
- Urine infections
- Diabetes
- Insufficient fluid intake
- Some medications (especially diuretics)

For people with stomas
- Removal or bypassing of the large bowel reduces the body’s ability to conserve water from the stool
- Stoma output that exceeds 1 litre in 24 hours

IDENTIFYING dehydration

Symptoms vary but may include any of these:
- Increased thirst and / or dry mouth
- Reduced urine output – urine is darker in colour than usual
- Feeling of weakness / lethargy
- Headache
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Palpitations (heart pounding / jumping)
- Constipation
- Inability to sweat
- Weight loss and lack of skin fullness (turgour)

What to do if any of these symptoms occur
- Increase fluid intake – suck on ice chips or cubes
- Reduce activity and seek shelter from heat / sun
- Reduce body temperature if raised, by removing excess clothing / bedding, reducing ambient room temperature, wiping limbs and face with wet towels or having a cool, NOT cold shower
- Aim to drink 2 litres (6 – 8 glasses) of fluid per day
- Seek medical help if symptoms don’t improve within an hour
- Seek early assistance from a health professional regarding use of sports or electrolyte-replacing drinks

If diarrhoea is the cause of the dehydration and it persists for 24 hours check with your doctor or Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN)

Foods to help THICKEN your stool output
- Pasta
- Pumpkin
- Dumplings
- Custard
- Tapioca
- Pancakes
- Pretzels
- Bananas
- Rice water
- Cheese
- Mashed potato
- Arrowroot
- Uncooked corn flour
- Toast
- Jelly babies / beans
- White bread (not fresh)
- Apple sauce
- Fresh grated apple (no skin)
- Smooth peanut butter

Other options
- Avoid high intake of fibre-rich foods
- Some bulking agents may help to thicken stool – talk to your STN
- Various antidiarrhoeal medications are available from a pharmacy

PREVENTION of dehydration
- Aim to drink 2 litres (6 – 8 glasses) of fluid per day
- Limit caffeine drinks (tea, coffee, cola) which increase fluid loss
- Avoid alcohol which increases fluid loss
- Plan ahead – take extra water to school, work or exercise area
- Exercise in the cool of the day and wear appropriate clothing
- Wash your hands before food preparation or eating
- Advise your doctor or pharmacist if medications cause a problem

For the person with a stoma: monitor your output regularly