



Your Care



THOUGHTFUL CARE FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

Summer Care for Older Parents

Hydration & heat-safety checklist



A practical, printable guide to help families spot dehydration early and make drinking easier.



FREE DOWNLOADABLE CHECKLIST





The 60-second check when you visit

Hot weather can affect an older person before anyone realises they are not drinking enough. Use this quick check during warm spells, after illness or whenever their normal routine changes.



A fresh drink is visible and easy to reach.



They have had several drinks since waking, not just one cup with breakfast.



Their mouth and lips do not look unusually dry.



They are passing urine regularly and it is pale yellow, where this can be checked.



They seem alert and like their usual self.



They have eaten something, even if it is a lighter meal.



They have a safe plan for the next drink and the next check-in.



Curtains or blinds are closed on the sunny side of the home.



Do not rely on thirst alone

Older adults may not feel thirsty until dehydration has already begun. Offer drinks regularly rather than waiting to be asked.



Check individual advice

Some people may need tailored advice because of a heart or kidney condition, fluid restrictions or swallowing difficulties. Follow GP, nurse or speech and language therapist advice.





It is not always as simple as “drink more”

Memory problems, reduced mobility, swallowing difficulties, continence worries, low mood and simply forgetting can all make drinking harder. These practical prompts can help.



MAKE DRINKING EASIER

- Offer smaller drinks more often instead of one large glass.
- Put drinks in their line of sight and within easy reach.
- Use a familiar cup or glass they enjoy using.
- Link drinks to routines such as medication, meals, TV programmes and visits.
- Sit and have a drink together rather than repeatedly reminding them.
- Keep a lidded jug or bottle nearby and check it is actually being used.
- Try different temperatures and flavours: cold water, milk, tea, diluted juice, soup, yoghurt, jelly, ice lollies and water-rich foods.



WHAT CAN COUNT TOWARDS FLUID?

- Water and diluted sugar-free squash.
- Milk and milky drinks.
- Tea and coffee also count towards fluid intake.
- Soup, yoghurt, jelly and ice lollies can help boost fluid intake.
- Water-rich foods such as melon, berries, cucumber and tomatoes.

Always consider diabetes, allergies, swallowing guidance and personal preferences.



A useful general guide

The NHS advises most people to aim for 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid across the day, with more often needed in hot weather.

Try a “drink station”

Keep a jug or bottle, favourite glass, and a simple note together in the room they use most. Keep it uncluttered and refresh it at each visit. A visible prompt is often more useful than another reminder from across the room.





Know what you are looking for

Dehydration and heat illness can look like tiredness, a “bad day” or a worsening of an existing condition. A sudden change should never be dismissed as simply ageing or dementia.



POSSIBLE DEHYDRATION



- Dry mouth, strong-smelling urine or passing less urine than usual.
- Dizziness, headache or unusual tiredness.
- Feeling thirsty, irritable or light-headed.
- Sunken-looking eyes or unusually dry skin.
- More muddled, sleepy or drowsy than usual.



POSSIBLE HEAT EXHAUSTION



- Feeling very hot, dizzy or weak.
- Headache or nausea.
- Loss of appetite.
- Fast breathing or a racing heartbeat.
- Muscle cramps.
- Pale, clammy skin.

What to do straight away

- 1 Move them somewhere cooler and stay with them.
- 2 Offer cool drinks and cool their skin with cold water, damp cloths or wrapped cool packs.
- 3 Offer cool fluids in small, frequent sips if they are awake and can swallow safely.
- 4 Call NHS 111 when urgent medical advice is needed or you are worried about a change.



Call 999 in an emergency

Call 999 if they are still unwell after 30 minutes of cooling and fluids, if they become confused, lose consciousness, have a seizure, have very fast breathing, or are very hot with no improvement.

General information based on NHS dehydration, hydration and heat illness guidance and UKHSA hot weather advice.
This does not replace individual medical advice.





Today's drinks at a glance

Use this for a day or two when you are worried someone may be forgetting to drink. It is not a medical chart. It simply helps the family see what has actually been offered and taken.



Before you begin

Write down any fluid limit or swallowing advice below. If none has been given, the NHS general guide is 6 to 8 cups or glasses across the day, with extra fluids often needed in hot weather.

Name		Date	
Individual fluid advice		Who is checking in later?	

Time	Drink offered	A few sips	Most / all	Notes
On waking		☐	☐	
Breakfast		☐	☐	
Mid-morning		☐	☐	
Lunch		☐	☐	
Mid-afternoon		☐	☐	
Tea time		☐	☐	
Evening		☐	☐	
Extra		☐	☐	

Before you leave

☐ Fresh drink and refill are within reach.

☐ Easy food or snacks are available.

☐ Sunny curtains or blinds are closed.

☐ The next check-in has been agreed.

NEED SOMEONE FAMILIAR TO CHECK IN?

Your Care supports families across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and BANES with practical home support, meal and drink prompts, shopping and companionship.

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