



Hounslow and Richmond
Community Healthcare



NHS Trust

Women's Health Physiotherapy Service

Fluids Advice

Information for patients

To provide guidance on how to manage fluid intake.

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This document can be provided in **different languages and formats**. For more information please contact:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

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Fluid Advice

Fluids are vital for both our general health and bladder health. By thinking carefully about the type, quantity and timing of drinks you have, you may help yourself avoid many bladder problems.

- It is recommended that we drink **1.5 litres of fluid/day**. This is about 6-8 mugs/8-10 cups and will keep the urine dilute. Concentrated urine can irritate our bladders, giving feelings of wanting to pass urine often and urgently. Drinking plenty will also help to avoid urine infections and the formation of stones.
- Tea, coffee, cola all contain **caffeine**. Caffeine may excite your bladder muscle, increasing your urge to go to the toilet and making you go more often.
- By reducing the number of drinks containing caffeine, some symptoms may disappear. Remember to always replace caffeinated drinks, to keep up your total **fluid intake**. Try decaffeinated drinks – choosing a product that has been decaffeinated with water or carbon dioxide rather than chemicals (see label). Reduce caffeine gradually.
- Space your drinks out over the day.
- If getting up to go to the toilet **at night** is a problem, try not to drink after 7-730pm and make sure it's caffeine free.
- Drinking plenty of **water** is considered healthy.
- **Fruit juices** are a popular alternative. However, if you are taking any hay fever or heart and blood pressure drugs avoid having grapefruit juice (it can react with some of these).
- **Cranberry juice** has been shown to protect against urinary infections. The tannins in the juice prevent the bacteria clinging to the bladder surface. If you suffer from cystitis due

to a bacterial infection, try a glass in the morning and evening.

- **However**, cranberry juice may make interstitial cystitis (cystitis not caused by a bacterial infection) worse. Reduced sugar cranberry juice is available for diabetics and those on calorie controlled diets. Those with rheumatoid arthritis and upper gastric irritation may find acidic juices, such as cranberry, adversely affect the condition.
- **Herbal teas** are often seen as a healthy alternative to tea/coffee. However, each herb and the amount drunk will have a different effect on the body. Therefore it is advisable not to drink more than 3 cups/day of any one type. Green tea also contains caffeine.
- **Chamomile tea** relaxes muscle spasms so can ease symptoms of cystitis or a painful bladder. Not recommended if you suffer from asthma /eczema or if you are on anticoagulant therapy, are pregnant or breast feeding.
- All types of **alcohol** will make you pass more urine and may excite the bladder muscle.

Cranberry Juice

- There is conflicting evidence about cranberry products preventing cystitis. Cranberry is not an antibiotic and does not kill bacteria. A chemical in the cranberry product is thought to prevent certain bacteria from attaching to cells that line the bladder. The theory is that this helps to prevent bacteria from infecting the bladder. Therefore, cranberry may help to prevent (rather than cure) cystitis.
The benefit may not be seen for up to eight weeks
- Cranberry Capsules may not be as effective as the juice

A review was published in 2008 of ten research trials that had studied the effects of taking various cranberry products each day (juice,tablets,etc.). This Cochrane review (see reference at end) concluded that women who took cranberry products had, on average, fewer urine infections than women who did not take cranberry products.

However, a more recent research trial was published in 2011. In this trial, 319 students who had had a urine infection were followed up for six months, or until they had a second urine infection (whichever came first). They were split into two groups – those who took a glass of cranberry juice each day and those who did not, the results showed that the number of women who had a second urine infection within six months was no different in the two groups.

What seems clear is that cranberry juice is no magic cure and will not prevent all bouts of cystitis. But, it may help to reduce the number of cystitis bouts, and it may be worth a try. If you do give it a try, some points about cranberry products include:

- You can **buy** cranberry juice (capsules, drinks, etc.) from supermarkets, pharmacies and health stores. They are not available on the NHS.
- The **optimum dose** is not clear. It is thought that a daily dose of high strength capsule (containing at least 200mg of cranberry extract) is best, as this is likely to be more effective than drinking cranberry juice. This may be why the more recent trial (using juice) did not show any benefit.
- Cranberry **can react** with certain medicines; in particular, do not take it if you take a medicine called **warfarin**.
- Diabetics should consult their continence specialist or doctor even before taking the low sugar variety
- Arthritis may be aggravated by an acid-based drink
- It may cause heartburn or upset a hiatus hernia
- It may cause diarrhoea if you have IBS, diverticulitis or colitis
- The acidity may increase bladder pain during attacks of cystitis
- Take to prevent cystitis and not to cure it. During an acute infection stop the juice and take your prescribed medication/over the counter remedy. Resume when the infection and bladder inflammation have subsided

Night time Problems

Needing to Go Too Often – ‘Nocturia’

Nocturia refers to being woken at night by the need to pass urine. This is uncommon under the age of 60 but after that age a normal pattern would be once a night in your sixties, twice a night in your seventies, three times a night in your eighties and so on. The causes may include:

- 1. Excessive fluid intake before retiring:** cut down on any drinks in the last two hours before you go to bed – especially cut out any alcohol, coffee or tea as these stimulate urine production.
- 2. Reduced bladder capacity:** bladder retraining can help – but improvement at night will only come when any daytime problem has been dealt with. There is a tendency for bladder capacity to be reduced as you get older.
- 3. Fluid redistribution:** the symptoms of this are ankles, legs, thighs and fingers swollen with excess fluid. At night, when you lie down, the fluid is reabsorbed into the blood stream and the kidneys then offset this dilution of the blood by producing more urine. Try cutting down your salt intake to see if this helps. Put your feet up when you have the chance to during the day. If these methods don't work, consult your doctor so that he can rule out any more serious problem, he may suggest a diuretic pill, to stimulate urine production during the day, but it is not a good idea to take these for any long period of time.
- 4. Failure of the bladder to concentrate urine at night:** Normally a young adult produces two-thirds of total daily urine in the day and one-third at night, when the kidneys concentrate it so as to produce less volume – the result of a hormone effect on the kidneys. The result is that the first

urine your pass in the morning will be darker than usual, in later life though, the kidneys are less able to concentrate urine overnight, so that this effect will be less noticeable, an artificial hormone – desmopressin – can sometimes be used to suppress urine production at night (but not in people with high blood pressure or heart problems). The natural side effect of this is of course that you will produce more urine during the day.

Cochrane Review (cranberry juice information)
http://www.cochrane.org/CD001321/RENAL_cranberries-for-preventing-urinary-tract-infections)

ELinks:

The Bladder and Bowel Foundation is a charity providing information and education to both public and health professionals. A continence nurse helpline is available at the number below.

Bladder and Bowel Foundation

SATRA Innovation Park

Rockingham Road

Kettering

Northants NN16 9JH

Email: info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org

Helpline: 0845 345 0165

General Enquiries: 01536 533255

How are we doing?

We appreciate and encourage comments about any aspect of care or treatment. Don't hesitate to speak to a member of staff or contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** details on the front page.

For a full list of **references** for this leaflet please contact the **service** using details shown on the front page.

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