

Healthy Living: Are You at Risk for Dehydration?¹

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Figure 1. Water or club soda with lemon or lime is a refreshing drink.

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Older adults, especially women and those over 85, often are at increased risk for dehydration. Taking certain medications, not feeling thirsty, or having a health condition that makes it difficult to drink can contribute to dehydration. Some of these risk factors can be controlled, and some cannot. Answer the questions below

to find out if you are at risk for dehydration, and if so, how you can decrease your risk!

Table 1. Risk factors and symptoms of dehydration.

	YES	NO
I am older than 85 years.		
I am female.		
I have diabetes, urinary incontinence, or kidney disease.		
I have frequent fevers, vomiting, or diarrhea.		
I take laxatives, diuretics, or sedatives.		
I drink less than six cups of fluids each day.		
I often have dark yellow urine.		
I have problems swallowing.		

If you answered “YES” to any of the statements above, you’re likely dehydrated or at a high risk for becoming dehydrated. It’s important to prevent dehydration because it

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can lead to serious health problems. In severe cases, hospital treatment may be needed.

Drink small amounts of fluids throughout the day, even if you aren't thirsty. Try water, carbonated water, 100% fruit juices, low-sodium soups and vegetable juices, diluted sports drinks, and low-fat or fat-free (skim) milk. Tea and coffee also can help you stay hydrated.



Figure 2. Contrary to popular belief, coffee and tea do contribute to hydration!
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