



REMINDER

Hydration During the Winter

Description of Issue and Importance

Dehydration is one of five major causes of death among people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD).

Dehydration can occur in winter as well as summer and is just as serious. Energy-expending winter activities such as shoveling snow, the use of heavy clothing, and being in dry heated air can cause significant sweating and/or fluid loss.

People do not feel as thirsty when the weather is cold and tend not to drink as much.

Recommended Action and Prevention Strategy

- Watch for early signs and symptoms of dehydration such as:
 - **Dry mouth**
 - **Thirst**
 - **Muscle weakness**
 - **Fatigue**
 - **Headaches**
 - **Dark colored urine**
 - **No tears when crying**
- Make sure individuals drink at least eight (8) cups of fluids daily, even if they don't feel thirsty, to maintain hydration and enhance the body's ability to maintain optimal health. Make adjustments to the amount of fluid based on physician's order for a specific individual. For example, individuals with kidney or heart conditions may be restricted on the amount of fluid they can have in a 24-hour period.

HEALTH & SAFETY REMINDER

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FACT SHEET

- Get immediate medical care if you see severe signs and symptoms of dehydration such as extreme thirst, no urination for eight (8) hours, shriveled skin, dizziness, and confusion.
- Treat children, older adults and individuals with IDD with more caution as they are at greater risk to suffer from dehydration.
- Some individuals react differently to caffeine and sometimes caffeine intake contributes to dehydration. Make sure children and older adults do not drink too many caffeine containing drinks and/or foods.

References

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