

Dementia and Staying Hydrated

Dehydration is a common challenge for people with dementia for many different reasons. The part of the brain that recognises we are dehydrated and sends a message to let us know we are thirsty doesn't always work properly. It might be that mobility is a problem so accessing drinks is difficult; for some swallowing can make staying hydrated a challenge whilst for others, memory problems mean they simply forget to have a drink.

As well as other problems dehydration increases the risk of urinary tract infection, which can cause an increase in confusion and delirium. And all the problems related to dehydration are compounded during hot weather when we all need to drink more.

So what can we do to help people living with dementia stay hydrated, especially during hot spells? Here are some things that our carers have found helpful.

1. Leave glasses and/or lightweight jugs of water within easy reach.
2. Make sure drinking vessels are suitable, e.g., use non-spill cups or mugs with sturdy bases, and make sure they are in the line of sight. Straws might also be helpful.
3. Make having a drink sociable. Have a cup of tea/glass of juice together. And always provide a drink with a meal.
4. Remind the person to drink regularly. Put notices up around the house and leave notes. Use telephone alerts to remind you to call them through the day. Some people have found electronic reminders such as 'Alexa' useful.
5. Vary drinks and make them more interesting. Simple tap water looks more appealing with a slice of lemon, orange or cucumber added and herbal teas are a good alternative to regular tea and coffee.
6. Provide foods that have a high-water content such as soup, tomatoes, cucumber, asparagus and fruits like grapes, berries, oranges and watermelon.

If you need any help or guidance, want to find out about other activities and services, or just need someone to talk to who understands your situation, Dementia Friendly Keighley is here for you.

You can call us on **07452 773788** between **10am and 2pm daily**, text (**SMS**) or **WhatsApp 'CALL BACK'** on the same number or leave a message outside of these hours and we will call back as soon as possible. Please note: Times and days of our activities and services are subject to change, so please call for up to date information.

