

# Promoting Hydration in Older Adults: “Fluid for Thought”

## What is dehydration?

A fluid imbalance caused by inadequate intake or excessive fluid loss.

### Factors related to dehydration

#### Falling

- Fluid depletion may lead to:
  - low blood pressure
  - falls

#### Confusion

- Dehydration increases risk of delirium.
- People with dementia may forget to drink.

#### Incontinence

- Older people may self-restrict fluids to minimize incontinence.

#### Iatrogenic Disorders

- To avoid iatrogenic disorders, minimize:
  - fasting times
  - diuretics
  - laxatives
  - physical restraints

#### Impaired Homeostasis

Age-related changes that increase one's risk of dehydration:

- Thirst response is blunted
- Total body water decreases
- Decline in ability of kidneys to concentrate urine

## Strategies to prevent DEHYDRATION

### What can you do?

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- Identify those at **high risk** for dehydration.
- Watch for 2 causes:**
  - inadequate fluid intake
  - excessive fluid loss
- Offer fluids:**
  - small amounts each time you enter the room
  - put fluids within reach
  - preferred beverages



Originator of the O Complex – Ronald Cape