Nutrition for Older Adults: Water and Dehydration

Water

Older adults need 6 to 8 cups of water each day. Water can come in many forms:
- Water
- Juice
- Milk
- Soup
- Coffee
- Tea
- Soft drinks

Dehydration

Although many fluids are available, many older adults become dehydrated. Many factors put older adults at higher risk of dehydration.
- Thirst sensation decreases with age. Older adults may not notice thirst.
- Body water decreases with age. This leaves a smaller margin of safety for water loss.

Risk of Dehydration

Some symptoms of dehydration are:
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Increased body temperature
- Increased breathing and pulse rate
- Dizziness
- Confusion

Dehydrated older adults are also at higher risk of infections and pneumonia.
Tips to Help Fluid Intake

- Have fluids at meals and snacks.
- Keep fluids close at hand in a pitcher or glass to help with fluid intake.
- Decreased strength can make it difficult to lift a full glass or pour water from a pitcher. If a person is weak using a small glass or a straw can help with fluid intake.

Sources
