

Getting Ready to Learn about Dehydration

Learning something new can be hard. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to read over this information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who else do you want to learn this information?
- What is the best way for you to learn? Reading, listening, watching or by doing things yourself?
- Tell staff if you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your child's health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits at a time. If there is something you don't understand, it's ok to ask us to explain again.

What I need to learn about Dehydration:

1. I will say what is causing the dehydration.
2. I will learn and watch for signs of dehydration.
3. I will know what to give my child to drink to help prevent or treat dehydration.
4. I will have a plan for when to call my doctor if my child is dehydrated.

The staff will use three questions to teach me about Dehydration:

1. What is the main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure I know the information.

What is the main problem?

Dehydration is caused by water loss. This happens with vomiting or diarrhea. When vomiting or diarrhea is severe, a child may lose sodium, potassium and chloride. These minerals or 'electrolytes' are important for muscles and nerves.

The risk of dehydration is greatest in babies and young children. Small body size means that it takes less water loss to lead to dehydration.

What do I need to do?

I will tell staff what is causing my child to become dehydrated.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Not drinking enough by mouth

I will tell staff the signs of dehydration.

- Fussy, plays less, sleepy
- Dry or sticky mouth
- Less urine than normal or fewer than 6 wet diapers a day
- Urine is dark yellow in color
- Fewer tears when crying
- Sunken soft spot on the top of my baby's head
- Sunken eyes on any age child
- Cool, pale or wrinkled skin

I will tell staff what to give my child to drink to treat dehydration. I will:

- Offer small amounts of water to see if my baby or child can keep it down without vomiting. Give slowly. Try to give 1 ounce (6 teaspoons) in an hour. Then up to 2 ounces in an hour (12 teaspoons).
- Avoid sugary drinks like juice, pop or some of the sports drinks that have large amounts of sugar in them. It can make diarrhea worse.
- Give breastfed or formula fed babies should their normal diet as soon as possible. Breast milk and formulas should be full strength and not diluted with water.
- Restart solid food as soon as possible. Small amounts of foods such as bananas, vegetables, applesauce, cereals, breads, potatoes, pretzels, yogurt and rice can be offered frequently.
- My child's doctor may suggest a drink I can buy that helps give back the lost sodium and potassium. These are called electrolyte and fluid replacement solutions and come in liquid or freezer pops.

I will tell staff when I need to call my doctor for treatment of dehydration.

- If my child is too sick to drink
- If my child is listless
- If my child shows signs of dehydration
- If my child has vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- If there is blood in the diarrhea

- If my child's vomit is green colored, has blood in it or looks like coffee grounds.
- If my child's abdomen is distended (swollen) or my child is having severe pain.

Why is this important to me?

I want my child to be happy and healthy. I want to be able to recognize when my child is getting sick and how to prevent dehydration.

As part of my child's care, I have received this education plan on Dehydration.

RL 5.2

Pediatric Dehydration Education Plan

Resources for Staff

- www.healthychildren.org Search “dehydration”
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus> Search “gastroenteritis”

Teaching Tools

- [Signs of Dehydration](#)
- [Tips of Dehydration and Prevention](#)
- [Treating Dehydration with Electrolyte Solution](#)

References

- Burns, C. E., Dunn, A. M., Brady, M. A., Starr, N. B., & Blosser, C. G. (2009). *Pediatric primary care* (4th ed.). St. Louis, MA: Saunders, Elsevier
- www.healthychildren.org
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000252.htm>

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**Always close each teaching session with the question,
“What questions do you have for me?”**

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