

"Why Am I So Thirsty?"



Questions & Answers About Being Thirsty for Folks on Dialysis

The ESRD Network of Texas



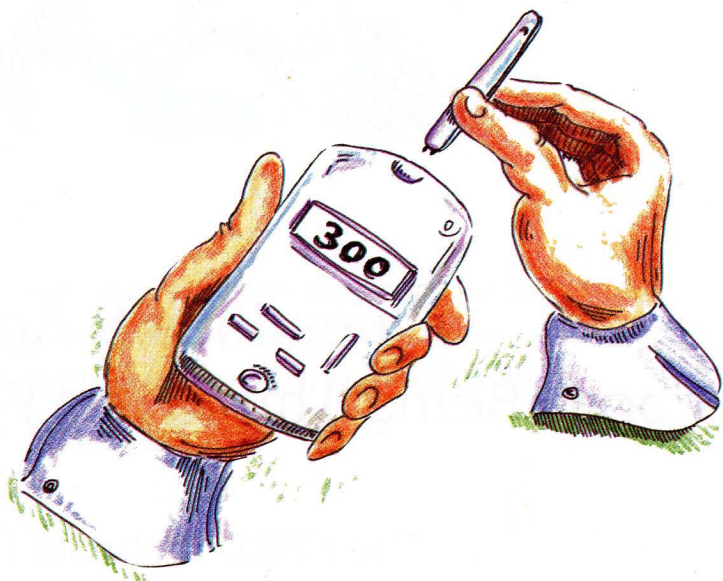
Q: Why am I so thirsty between my dialysis treatments?

A: There are many reasons why you could be thirsty. Here are some:



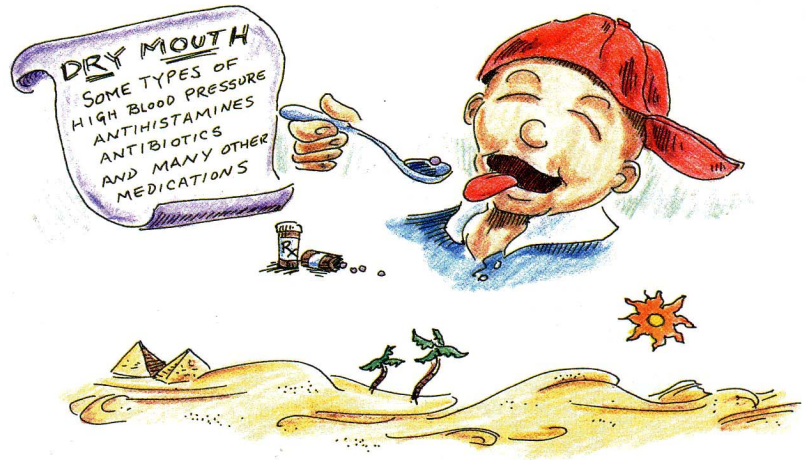
1. You could be eating foods that have salt added, or are made with salty ingredients. Salt will make anyone thirstier!

2. If you have diabetes and your blood sugars are running higher than they should be, you will be thirsty!



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3. You could be taking certain kinds of medicines that make your mouth dry.



4. If the weather is hot, you could be getting overheated.



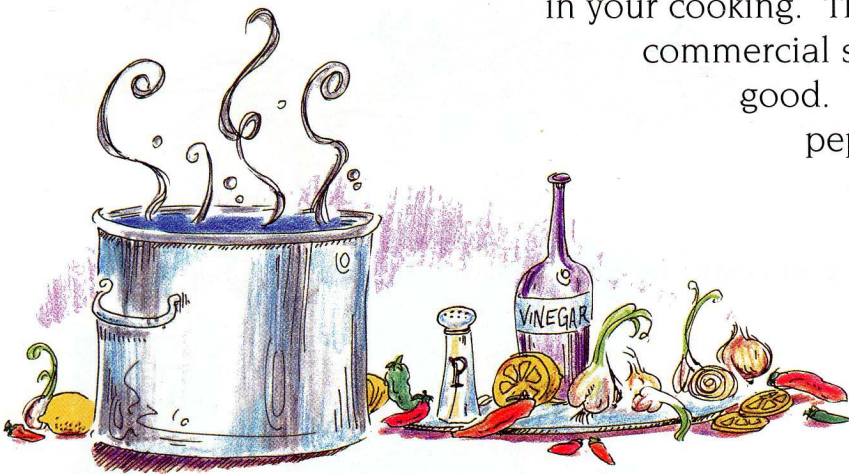
Remember, the urge to drink is natural, especially for people with kidney failure. Thirst can be changed by many things (including some dialysis medicines, such as saline given during a treatment).

Perhaps even knowing that you're not supposed to drink very much may make you want more!

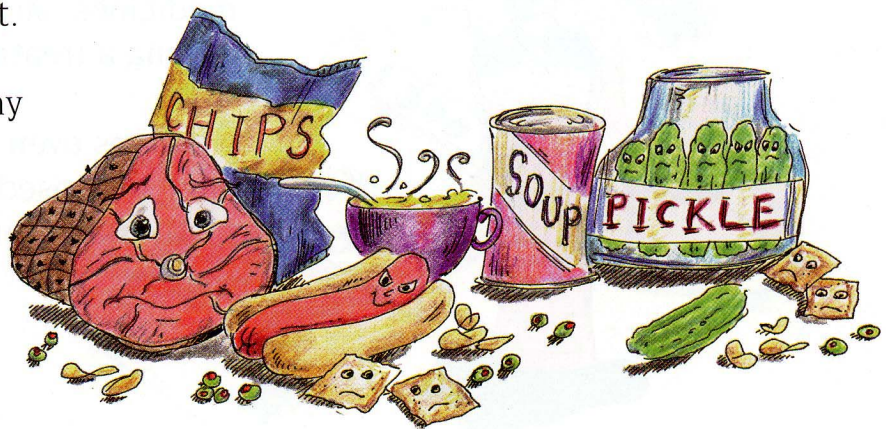
Q: Now that I know what could make me thirsty, what do I do next?

A: Think about the reasons for being thirsty, and imagine how to solve each one.

1. Use unsalted seasonings, herbs and spices in your cooking. There are some commercial spice blends that are good. Basic flavorings like pepper, garlic and onion are enough for some people, while others like fresh jalapeño, red pepper, lemon or vinegar in certain foods.



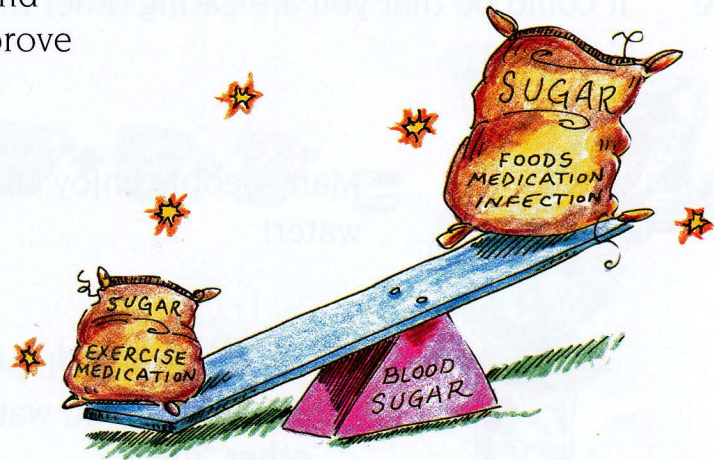
Buy meats that are fresh, not smoked or cured. Pickled foods are salty! If you eat restaurant meals or have fast foods, these are almost always cooked with salt. Also, canned meats, canned soups and many condiments and sauces are salty. Watch out for chips and crackers! Ask your dietitian for more helpful tips.



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2. If you have diabetes and have high blood sugars, then you will be more thirsty. There are many things that can affect your blood sugar, such as food, exercise, medicines and infection. Talk to your doctor, nurse and dietitian about ways to improve YOUR blood sugar levels.

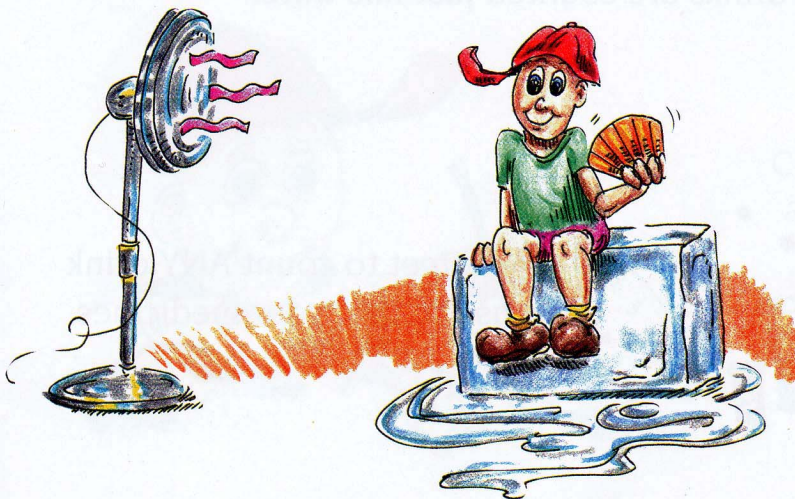
If you are having trouble getting supplies to manage your diabetes, talk with your social worker.



3. Ask your doctor if one or more of your medicines could be causing you to have a dry mouth. Is there a possibility that this drug could be changed? Your doctor may want to try certain medicines that could possibly decrease your thirst.

4. In warm weather, be prepared to keep cool if you don't have air-conditioning!

Try to stay out of the sun! One trick is to keep a spray bottle of fresh water handy. Spray your face and arms to cool off quickly under a fan.





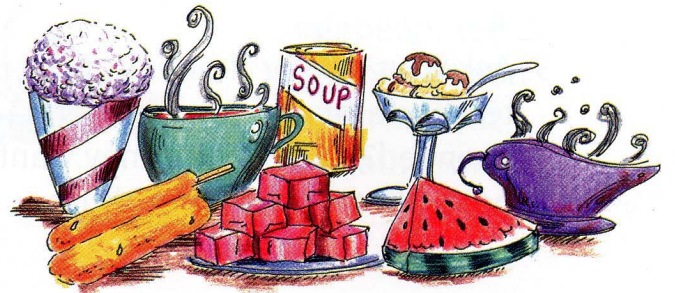
Q: My doctor told me not to drink much water, and I don't. In fact, I don't drink ANY water, and I still gain too much weight between my treatments. Why is that?

A: It could be that you are eating other things that count as fluid.



• Many people enjoy chewing ice. Ice melts down to water!

• Gelatin (Jello ®), popsicles, snow cones, ice cream, sherbet, watermelon, soup, gravy and other "juicy" foods can all add up to a high fluid intake.



• Of course, ALL kinds of drinks are counted just like water.

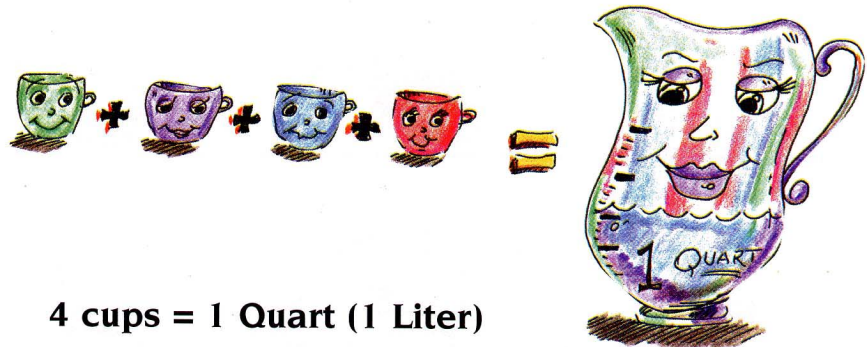


• Don't forget to count ANY drink you use to take your medicines.

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You can keep track of all the liquids you drink in a day.

- Start with an empty liter-sized bottle or a quart jar.



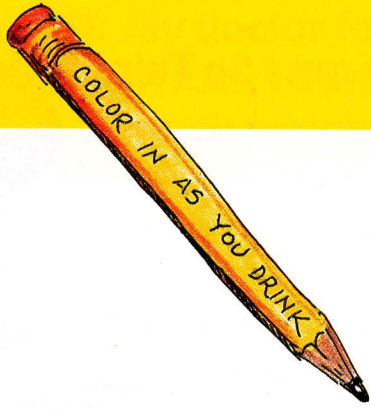
- Each time you drink, pour the same amount that you just drank into the bottle. When that bottle is full, you may be done with your fluid allowance for the day!

You can also keep an easy chart. Use the chart shown on the next 2 pages as a guide to get you started.



Check with your dietitian about the fluid limit that's right for you.

MY FLUID for the DAY



1 cup

2 cups

3 cups

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



My Goal is _____ cups.

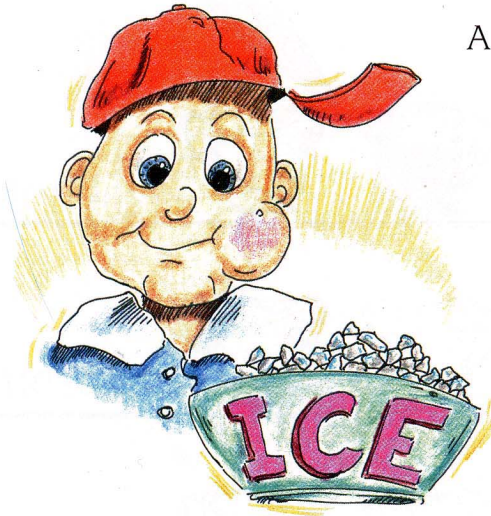
4 cups

5 cups

6 cups



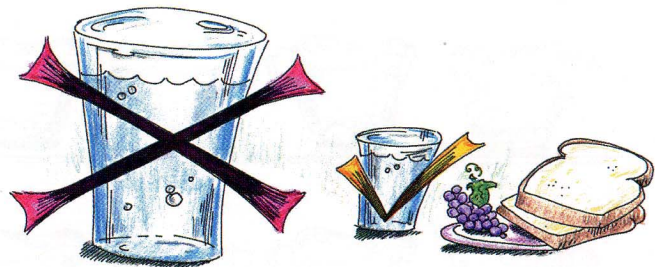
Q: Those are good tips. Do you have anymore ideas that you could share?



A: Sure! These are ideas that have worked for other people on dialysis. See if these work for you:

- Try sucking on small bits of ice instead of drinking larger amounts of water.

- Use a smaller glass with meals.



- Take your medicines with your mealtime beverage.



- How about refreshing your mouth by brushing your teeth more often?

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- Some people enjoy keeping a bottle of minty mouthwash in the refrigerator for a cold swish and gargle any time of the day!



- Athletic chewing gum can help your thirst for a short time because your mouth will make more saliva.

- A frozen lemon slice or frozen grape may be just enough to take the edge off your thirst. (Keep in mind that a whole lemon or 15 grapes is a serving of fruit).





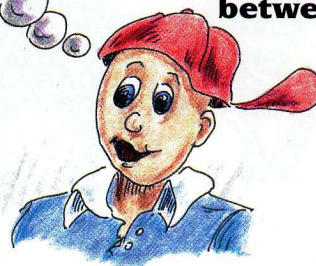
Managing fluid may not always be easy, especially when there are other pressures in your life. If you're feeling down about your struggles with kidney failure, like limiting your fluids, your social worker can help you.

Any trick that YOU can think of to better manage your thirst could be a good idea. When you control your fluid intake, your rewards will be:

“Better dialysis treatments, and keeping your heart in better condition?”



“Yes! With less swelling and less shortness of breath between treatments!”



Share YOUR SUCCESS with your dietitian, so that your ideas can be shared with others. Published by Network #14 while under contract with the Health Care Financing Administration, Baltimore, Maryland. The Network contract no. is 500-97-EO 32.

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