

The ABC's of Dry Weight



Your body weight is made up of two types of weight. Fluid weight is both your normal body water as well as the weight that you gain in-between treatments. Solid weight includes your bones, muscle and fat. Dry weight is your weight without **excess** fluid in your body **and** the lowest weight you can safely tolerate after dialysis without symptoms or low blood pressure. Your doctor decides what your dry weight should be by reviewing your dialysis treatments and by examining and talking to you.

Dialysis removes fluid weight that you gain between dialysis treatments to help keep you at your dry weight. When you are off the machine you also need to keep your total daily fluid intake to the amount ordered by your doctor. This amount is usually about a quart per day and drinking this amount every day should cause a gain of 2 kilograms or 4 pounds between dialysis treatments.

Remember the following:

You will gain too much fluid weight if you:

- + Drink more fluid than you should
- + Eat more sodium than you should

You will change your solid body weight if you:

- + Exercise more or exercise less
- + Eat more food or eat less food

Eating less food leads to loss of muscle, fat and solid weight and eating more food leads to gaining more muscle, fat and solid weight. If changes in your solid weight are missed and your doctor does not evaluate and adjust your dry weight often enough, you can have problems during and in-between your dialysis treatments.

It is important to discuss these changes in your health, appetite and physical activity with your doctor and the dialysis staff so that the dry weight ordered by your doctor can be changed to keep up with changes in your body and to keep you feeling your best.

How do you know if you are at your dry weight?

- + Your blood pressure may be within your normal range after dialysis or before your next treatment
- + You do not experience lightheadedness or cramping in-between dialysis treatments.
- + You do not have edema or swelling in your eyes, arms, hands, legs or feet.
- + Your breathing is comfortable and easy.
- + You don't need extra pillows to help you breathe comfortably while sleeping or laying flat.



How to tell if your body has too much fluid?

- ✚ Your blood pressure runs higher than normal.
- ✚ You become short of breath more easily.
- ✚ Your abdomen feels full or tight.
- ✚ Your eyes, arms, hands, legs or feet swell.
- ✚ You may experience a drop in blood pressure during dialysis from trying to remove the excess fluid which may cause you to feel nauseous, dizzy or weak after dialysis
- ✚ You may have muscle cramping due to excessive fluid weight gain loss during dialysis



REMEMBER anything you drink is fluid such as water, coffee, tea, soda, milk and all other drinks. Any food that is liquid at room temperature is counted as fluid intake. These may include ice cream or popsicles. Soups, stews and watery foods like watermelon contain fluids too.



HELPFUL HINTS to avoid gaining too much fluid between treatments:

- ✚ Know your daily fluid allowance.
- ✚ Use a container marked with your total daily fluid allowance to help you keep track of the fluid you drink. You can add to the container the amount of water equal to the portions of fluid you drink during the day to help yourself stay within your limit.
- ✚ Drink only when thirsty.
- ✚ Drink from small cups or glasses.
- ✚ Freeze small portions of your daily fruit, juice or soft drink allowance into ice cubes or popsicles to quench your thirst especially in warmer weather.
- ✚ Rinse your mouth with cold water or mouth wash and then spit it out.
- ✚ Suck on a piece of regular or sugar-free hard candy, a lemon or lime wedge, frozen grapes, or chew regular or sugar-free gum to stimulate saliva
- ✚ Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if any of your medications may cause you to become thirsty or have a dry mouth
- ✚ Avoid high sodium and sugary foods which increase thirst.



**TIME TO KEEP YOUR DRY WEIGHT ON TARGET
FOR A HEALTHIER QUALITY OF LIFE WITH
FLUID COMPLIANCE!!**

