

Section of Colon and Rectal Surgery

Dehydration and the Ileostomy Patient

Dehydration is the most common reason for readmission among new ileostomy patients. Patients with an ileostomy either no longer have or are temporarily diverted from their colon. The colon is the part of the digestive track responsible for absorbing fluid. When stool is diverted "higher up" through an ileostomy, that fluid leaves the body rather than being reabsorbed.

Whether your ileostomy is temporary or permanent, it is important to understand the signs and symptoms of dehydration. The following information will help ileostomy patients learn how to monitor ostomy output at home. Patients with an ileostomy need to actively manage diet and medications to control output, adjusting both as necessary. The more fluid you lose in your stool, the more likely you are to become dehydrated.

Monitoring:

- Ileostomy patients need to be aware of their input and output ("I's and O's").
 - o **Input -** how much fluid you take in daily by mouth.
 - Drink 10-12 glasses of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages every day.
 - Sports drinks can be helpful for electrolyte replacement. Try diluting the drink with water 1:1 to reduce the amount of sugar per serving. (ex. 1/2 cup water + 1/2 cup Gatorade).
 - Output Stool and Urine out daily.
 - No more than 1200 ml of ileostomy output daily.
 - A minimum of 500ml of ileostomy output daily
 - Urine should be a light yellow color; tea colored urine can mean you are dehydrated.
- Use the 1000ml measuring container provided to you at discharge to measure your output. Actual measurements are important. Recording just the number of times a bag is emptied is not enough information, some bags are emptied when 1/2 full, others when just 1/4 full.
- After the initial postoperative period and ostomy output continues to be under 1200ml you may discontinue measuring. You may want to keep the measuring tools for times when output increases due to diarrhea, flu or other intestinal bugs.

Record your input and output daily, bring this information to your follow up appointment.