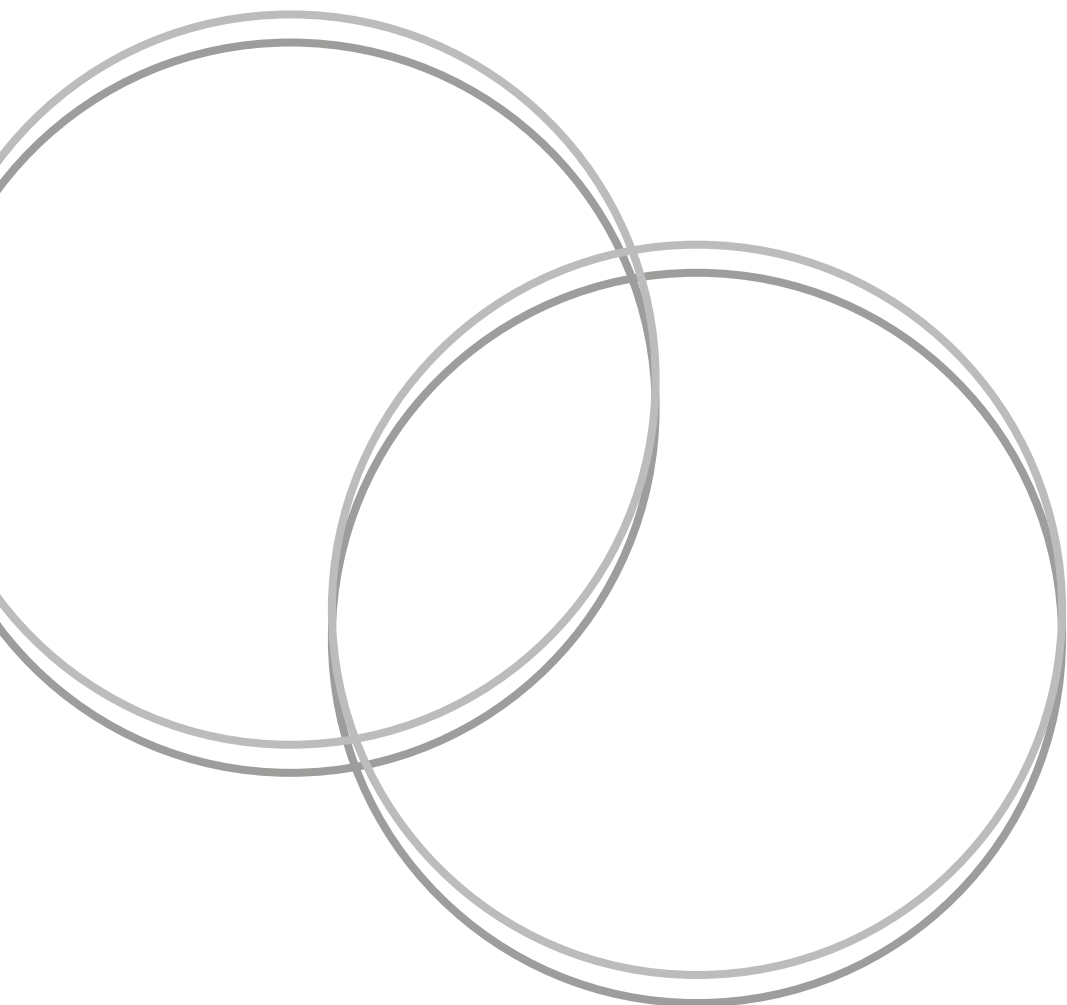




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# A Guide to Isotonic Fluids

Information for patients



## **A high gut or stoma output may occur for any of the following reasons:**

- A newly formed stoma,
- If your bowel is shortened after formation of a stoma,
- Your bowel is affected by disease or certain treatments.

With this, there is greater risk of becoming dehydrated or experiencing salt (electrolyte) imbalances. This leaflet provides ways to reduce your output. If you have any queries or concerns, please ask your Doctor, Dietitian or Stoma Nurse for advice.

## **How would I recognise dehydration:**

If you become dehydrated, you may experience:

- Dry, sticky mouth,
- Increased thirst,
- Light headedness or feeling dizzy, especially when going from sitting to standing,
- Tiredness,
- Headaches,
- Passing less urine which is dark or strong smelling,
- Muscle cramps.

The colour of your urine is a good guide to see how well hydrate you are. A clear, pale yellow colour suggests good hydration whereas a concentrated, dark yellow or brown colour may indicate you are dehydrated. Please check the colour of your urine regularly.

## **How do fluids affect my gut or stoma output:**

Drinking too much ordinary fluid may increase your stoma or gut output and make you dehydrated. This can also be caused by the caffeine in our beverages.

To control the output, you can make changes to the type and volume of fluids you drink.

### **Fluids are either:**

**Hypotonic:** these are less concentrated than your blood (e.g. water, diluted squash, coffee, tea, and milk). This causes sodium (salt) to move into your small bowel from the blood stream. Water follows sodium into the small bowel, which is then lost via gut or stoma output.

**Hypertonic:** these are more concentrated than your blood (e.g. sugary soft drinks, fruit juice and most Oral Nutritional Supplement drinks). When you drink hypertonic fluids, the concentration in the small bowel becomes more than that of the blood. This causes water to move from your blood into the gut, again contributing to higher stoma or gut output and dehydration.

**Isotonic:** these have a similar concentration to your blood. When the concentration is similar between the blood and the gut, it is easier for you to absorb fluid and salts (electrolytes) into the body. These fluids are best able to support hydration in the instance of high gut/stoma output.

### **How to drink Isotonic fluids:**

Drinking isotonic fluids is the best way to reduce the risk of dehydration and minimise the risk of salt (electrolyte) imbalances.

Unless informed otherwise by your Doctor, Dietitian or Stoma Nurse, it is advisable to:

- 1) Drink isotonic fluids – your team/dietitian will advise on how much per day
- 2) Limit hypotonic and hypertonic fluids to 500ml per day and opt for decaffeinated varieties.

## **Isotonic Drink Recipes**

### **Isotonic Squash/St Marks Solution:**

1 level teaspoon salt (3.5g)

½ level teaspoon sodium bicarbonate (2.5g)

6 level teaspoons glucose powder (20g)

Up to 1litre water or diluted squash (1000ml)

Directions: add all the dry ingredients to a jug then add enough water/diluted squash to meet the 1L line. This method is important to ensure the correct concentration. You can buy these ingredients from any pharmacy and some supermarkets or you can obtain a prescription from your GP.

### **Isotonic Lucozade Sport:**

500ml Lucozade Sport

½ level teaspoon salt (2.5g)

Directions: add salt to Lucozade Sport. You will need to consume 2x 500ml bottles per day. We cannot confirm that any alternatives brands will work. This can be discussed with your Dietitian.

An alternative recipe is Double Strength Dioralyte but it is important to ask your team if this is suitable for you **before** you start or switch to this drink.

**Tips:**

These drinks need to be made freshly each day. We recommend preparing them each morning and storing them in the fridge as the taste is much better when served cold.

Sip these fluids slowly throughout the day, rather than drinking large volumes at once, for the most helpful effect.

If you add squash or another flavour, remember to keep the total amount of fluid to 1litre.

Drinking your isotonic fluid via a straw may make it much easier to tolerate.

Try not to drink other fluids at the same time as your isotonic drinks. Try to leave at least half an hour between your isotonic drink and any other fluids.

Your local community Pharmacy can provide you with a 2.5ml teaspoon or simply use a 'half teaspoon' measurement spoon used for baking.

When it is hot, we sweat and lose salt and fluid from the body. In this situation people with a high stoma/gut output are more likely to feel thirsty and get dehydrated. In this instance, please make sure to consume more of your isotonic fluids as directed by your team and if you feel like you are or likely to become dehydrated, consult your Doctor, Dietitian or Stoma Nurse.





## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Dietetics  
April 2026  
Review: April 2029  
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