

We all need to drink an adequate supply of water, because our bodies are made up of almost 75% water! For seniors in particular, there may be serious risks associated with not drinking enough water, such as becoming dehydrated. Signs of dehydration vary from subtle signs such as dry lips or tongue, or more severe signs such as headaches, nausea, or dark colored urine, or confusion. Dehydration is one of the leading reasons for hospital admission for more than one million elderly people each year. Seniors are more at risk for dehydration because their natural sense of thirst declines with age. It's vital to drink water regularly, so how can we all develop good habits and avoid becoming dehydrated?

A reasonable rule to keep in mind is to drink one 8 ounce glass as soon as you get up, drink another glass about 15-30 minutes before each meal, and before bedtime. That is already 5 glasses per day, or about 40 ounces. The best way to stay hydrated is to sip water, and not to "guzzle" it, or drink it all at once.

For caregivers of seniors, proactive approaches are recommended. For instance, at Lakeside Assisted Living, we offer a self-serve café to our residents 24 hours per day, along with a variety of beverage choices at meal times, as well as a full glass of water offered to residents while administering medications. These are some of the ways to care for seniors while fostering their freedom and independence, thus allowing them to make wise choices for a healthier and independent lifestyle.