

Helpful tips

- Try not to disturb the site where the butterfly needle has been placed
- If the drip stops. don't worry. Sometimes just moving or shifting can make it start again particularly if placed in a limb
- If the drip starts to run very fast, you or your carer will have been shown how to stop the drip and who to contact
- If the needle site becomes red and sore. you or your carer will have been told who to contact
- If a swelling appears around the needle site, you or your carer will have been told who to contact
- DO continue to drink normally. The nurse will have advised you how much you should be drinking
- Should the needle fall out or become detached. don't worry it won't hurt You and your carer will have been told how to dispose of the needle and who to contact

Contact telephone number(s):

Single, Point of Access number:
0300 125 6789

Nurses name:

Let us know what you think and get involved

T: 0300 124 5300*
E: sirona.hello@nhs.net
W: www.sirona-cic.org.uk

*Calls from landlines are charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles vary, please check with your network provider. This is not a premium-rate number.

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Dehydration and Replacement (subcutaneous) Fluids

Information for patients

Service provided by

Introduction

Dehydration is caused by not enough intake or too much loss of fluid. Adults can become dehydrated in as little as 48 hours.

As you get older, your thirst response naturally decreases and you are likely to become used to a lower fluid intake.

Whatever the reason, dehydration can make you feel quite unwell and unable to function normally.

Your doctor or nurse prescriber may decide you have reached a stage of dehydration where fluids by mouth are not enough and that in order to prevent the situation from becoming critical, you require replacement or subcutaneous fluids.

What are replacement (subcutaneous) fluids?

Subcutaneous fluids are a safe and effective means of treating mild dehydration.

The fluids used are a solution of saline (salt) contained in a 1000ml bag.

How do I have these fluids

Depending on how well you are feeling, you will be either lying comfortably in bed or sitting in your armchair.

Your doctor will have asked a specialist nurse to become involved and set up the subcutaneous infusion.

The nurse will explain the procedure and ensure you are aware of what is involved and you will be required to give your consent

The Procedure

A very fine needle called a butterfly is inserted just underneath the surface of your skin (the subcutaneous layer), usually in your tummy, upper arm or upper outer thigh. This is quite painless and is very quick. The butterfly is attached securely to your skin with a see-through dressing and then is attached to the bag of infusion fluid which has been placed in a drip stand beside you.

This fluid is set to drip over 12-24 hours depending what the doctor has requested and your level of dehydration.

This is a very safe procedure and can take place in your own home provided you are living with a carer/spouse/other.

The drip will be monitored frequently by the nurse who will liaise with your doctor. Usually two or three days of infusion are enough to replenish your dehydration.

Are there any risks?

This is a very safe way of treating mild dehydration and ensures you have adequate fluids to prevent the situation getting worse. Subcutaneous fluids have been used as supportive rehydration in hospitals for many years. However you should be aware that subcutaneous fluids are used "off licence" as the fluid is intended for intravenous use. Your Dr or Nurse prescriber will take responsibility for this.

You or your carer will have been given a contact telephone number should there be any concerns.