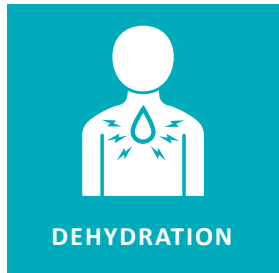


# THE FATAL FOUR IN I/DD

There are four major health issues identified in people with intellectual and/or development disabilities (I/DD) that have led to serious illnesses, infections, and sometimes death. They are called the Fatal Four: dehydration, seizures, choking/aspiration, and constipation.



SEVERE DEHYDRATION MAY CAUSE SERIOUS PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS AND EVEN DEATH. THIRST MAY NOT BE A RELIABLE SIGN OF THE NEED FOR WATER IN THIS POPULATION. A BETTER INDICATOR OF PROPER HYDRATION IS CLEAR OR LIGHT COLORED URINE.

## CAUSES OF DEHYDRATION

- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Sweating excessively
- Fever
- Medication side effects
- Medical conditions - diabetes (undiagnosed or uncontrolled), kidney disease, Crohn's disease
- Inability to communicate thirst
- Reliance on caregivers to provide fluids
- Aging

## SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION

- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Dizzy, lightheaded
- Sleepy, difficult to arouse
- Weak
- Thirsty
- Decrease in urination
- Dark, concentrated urine

## BE PROACTIVE TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION

- Provide personal water bottle when in the community.
- Increase fluids when in the sun, and before, during, and after exercise.
- Offer fluids between meals.
- Follow the 8x8 rule - eight 8oz glasses per day.
- Speak to physician for suggestions for those on a fluid restriction.
- Educate people with I/DD about the importance of drinking fluids.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages - coffee, tea, and soda.
- Offer creative types of fluids - gelatin, flavored ice pops, soups.
- Encourage fruits and vegetables with high water content.
- Increase fluids for fever, diarrhea, and vomiting, when able to tolerate.
- Be a role model - drink fluids throughout your shift.