



You will still be able to control your bowel motions after having a J-Pouch

The most common reason why you would need a J-Pouch (or ileoanal reservoir) is for the treatment of Ulcerative Colitis or familial polyposis. A J-Pouch results in your large bowel being removed and your small bowel being joined up to your rectum. A small reservoir is reserved to contain your stools before you open your bowels.

Side effects that you may experience with having a J-Pouch include:

- Need to pass stools more frequently as you don't have a large storage reservoir,
- Passing softer stools (water is usually absorbed in the large bowel and therefore without a it, water isn't re-absorbed),
- Pouchitis is a serious condition where an infection develops in the J-Pouch. If you have such an infection, you will generally require hospitalization to receive medical care including antibiotics as well as fluid and dietary supplementation.

Dehydration

A common complication of having to pass watery stools more frequently is that you are at greater risk of becoming dehydrated. If you become dehydrated, you may feel dizzy, especially when you get up quickly. You may also feel weak, listless, tired and lack energy for concentration. A good indicator to notice how hydrated you are is to look at your urine. The colour of your urine should be light yellow, however as you become more dehydrated, you will notice that your urine becomes darker and more concentrated. Your kidneys need you to be well hydrated to filter your blood therefore chronic dehydration also puts immense pressure on your kidneys and could result in them not working efficiently.

How much fluid do I need?

How much water have you had today? The general mantra for hydration is to drink 2L or 8 glasses of water each day. This is actually a broad rule that is generalised on the population level as it is easy to remember and can motivate people to increase or at least measure how much fluid they drink. Some people however will need more than the standard 2L measure to maintain adequate hydration, especially if you have had any modification to your large bowel. A more realistic strategy to work out how much fluid you actually need each day is to use the following equation:

Adult 18-60years: 35-45ml/kg/day

Adult >60years: 30-40ml/kg/day

Therefore if you are middle aged and weigh 80kg, you would need 2800-3600ml



Being dehydrated can result in headaches, dry skin and insomnia



Snacking on crackers, pretzels, or corn chips can increase your salt intake

(2.8-3.6L) fluid a day! Now thinking realistically, you will be able to absorb some of that fluid from food particularly your fruit and vegetables, but on average that will only account for about 500ml/day. A good exercise can be to calculate how much fluid you require daily using your age and weight and then compare it to how much fluid you actually drank yesterday. Need to stop for a water break?

Tips to prevent dehydration

If you think that you may not have enough fluid in your diet to stay hydrated, some easy strategies to implement to increase your fluid intake can include:

- Keep water as your drink of choice and avoid fruit juices, carbonated beverages and drinks with caffeine,
- In addition to drinking water in-between meals, try to have another drink at the end of your meal, rather than with your meal,
- Add a soluble fibre supplement into a glass of water, your cereal or some soup. The fibre will absorb fluid thickening up your stools therefore reducing the frequency you need to pass watery stools, and
- Modifying your salt intake to help retain fluid.

Talk to your Dietitian to discuss further strategies to prevent dehydration. Take extra care if you develop the flu, an infection or have diarrhoea. A weakened immune system puts extra pressure on your body and can make you dehydrated without prior warning.

Where to get help

You may feel that paying attention to how much water you're drinking isn't high on your priority list, but the truth is, you just won't be working at your 100% if you're dehydrated. It can be useful for you to make a review appointment with your Dietitian so they can assess your fluid intake and provide appropriate suggestions for you to optimise your diet and your health.

For more information about living with a J-Pouch or to make an appointment with an experienced Dietitian, call us on 1300 438 550 or visit

www.melaniemcgrice.com.au



Talk to your Dietitian to help achieve your personal optimal fluid intake