

# Dehydration



**Some reports suggest that as many as 30% of long-term care residents are chronically dehydrated**



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**Dehydration in palliative patients and the frail elderly is a significant problem.**

**Dehydration can occur for a variety of reasons:**

**The physiological mechanisms that control the thirst reflex may decline with age or be inhibited as a side effect of medications.**

**Urinary tract dysfunction can be painful and may reduce the intake of fluids - however, dehydration can also lead to urinary tract dysfunction.**

**Elderly patients with dementia may have decreased fluid intake**

## TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE HYDRATION:

- 1) Sip on water throughout the day. *Avoid juices between meals as this can promote tooth decay*
- 2) Suck on ice chips **ONLY** if this is appropriate for the resident
- 3) Use a humidifier at night

### FOR A 70-KG INDIVIDUAL

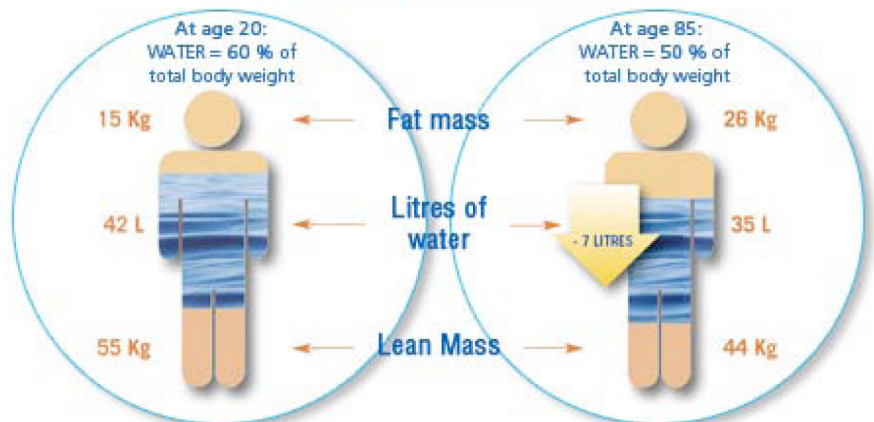


Figure 1: Diminution of water... according to M. Ferry, 2001.

The elderly are particularly susceptible to dehydration because a lower percentage of their body weight is made up of water.

An elderly person can have **up to 7 liters less** water in their bodies compared to a 20 year old.

## REFERENCES

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