



**Scottish
Water**
Trusted to serve Scotland



Hydration matters



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.



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Hydration matters

The easiest thing you can do to feel better today is to keep your body hydrated. Around 60% of your body is water, and you won't feel as well as you could if you don't keep your water levels right throughout the day. Water is a vital nutrient and the best thing you can drink for good hydration which also helps boost your mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Age Scotland has joined the wave and is supporting Scottish Water's **Your Water Your Life** campaign - encouraging everyone to top up from the tap; it's good for your health, your pocket and the planet.

There are now over 50 of Scottish Water's **Top Up Taps** across the country, from Shetland and Stornoway to the Scottish Borders, in cities and towns, parks and beaches. Remember to take a refillable bottle when you go out and about, so you can stay hydrated and refreshed on the go.

To find your nearest Scottish Water Top Up Tap visit:

www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/tapmap

or call the Customer Helpline on

0800 0778 778.





Tap water in Scotland

Scottish Water provides vital water and waste water services to over 2.5 million households across Scotland which are essential for good health and hygiene.

Scottish Water are always working to ensure there is a clear and fresh supply of safe, high quality tap water for everyone across Scotland to drink, use and enjoy whether at home, at work or in the community.

Water samples are taken regularly at service reservoirs, water treatment works and customers' taps across Scotland to monitor the quality of the drinking water. The quality of tap water in Scotland remains at an all-time high, with over 99% of quality tests meeting strict standards.

For more information about tap water in Scotland, visit the Scottish Water website **www.scottishwater.co.uk**, or contact their Customer Helpline on **0800 0778 778**.



How does water help my body to work?

Being properly hydrated helps your body to:

- maintain the right temperature
- regulate blood pressure
- flush out toxins
- support your immune system
- digest your food
- move oxygen and nutrients around your body





How can I keep my body hydrated?

Water and drinks

Most people know they should drink more water; if you don't remember to do this, try to keep water with you during the day to remind you.

National guidance is that you should drink around 6-8 glasses of fluid a day (roughly 1.5 to 2 litres). Your best option is to drink clear water as your body does not have to process out any of the additives, but tea, coffee, hot water, herbal teas, milk, diluted fruit juices or squash all count too. Avoid having sugary fizzy drinks too often as they have a surprising amount of sugar in them: a 330ml can of fizzy juice could contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar. Get into the habit of always having a glass or refillable bottle of water handy wherever you are. You could keep a record or chart of the number of drinks you are having for a few days to give you a clear idea whether you are drinking enough fluids.

Food

Eating the water you need can really help: eating water rich foods is a great and tasty way to stay hydrated. Water rich foods include soups, stews, custard, jelly, melon and tomatoes; most leafy greens are around 90% water.

Food also helps to keep your water balance right by supplying the nutrients you need to stay well. Eating makes you thirsty, and dehydration can affect your appetite, so keeping your water balance right will help you to stay well.



Dehydration problems:

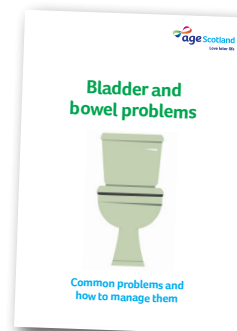
What increases the risk?

Your body loses water through sweat, tears, vomiting, urine or diarrhoea, so you will need extra fluids if you are in a warm environment, are taking exercise that makes you sweat or if you are unwell.

As people get older, they can become less aware that they are thirsty and are becoming dehydrated. Some people who have problems with their bladder and bowels try not to drink much as they are concerned about getting to the toilet on time, though this can make bladder and bowel problems worse. Seek advice from a healthcare professional if you are experiencing bladder or bowel problems. See our **Bladder and bowel problems** guide for more information.

Some long term conditions can affect the water balance in your body: high blood sugar because of diabetes, or some high blood pressure medicines such as ‘water tablets’ can make you want to go to the toilet more often.

Drinking too much alcohol can also cause dehydration; you should stay within the safe limit of 14 units of alcohol a week and drink plenty of water if you have been drinking alcohol. One unit of alcohol is a small 125ml glass of wine or half a pint of beer.





Signs of dehydration

Common signs of dehydration are:

- feeling thirsty and lightheaded
- a dry mouth, lips and eyes
- tiredness
- headache
- having dark coloured, strong-smelling urine
- passing urine less often than usual
- confusion
- irritability

Common problems with dehydration

Digestion

Your bowel needs to be properly hydrated to work properly. If there is not enough water in your body you could have hard poo, constipation, pain and tiredness.

Your bladder needs you to be properly hydrated to prevent your urine being too strong, which can irritate your bladder and increase the risk of infection. Long term dehydration can increase your risk of kidney stones.

Swallowing

Even slight dehydration can make your mouth feel sticky because of a lack of saliva. This can make it difficult to swallow and even to talk.



Severe dehydration

You should contact NHS 111 or your GP if you are dehydrated, have tried to drink more, but your symptoms continue. Contact them immediately if you are extremely thirsty, are very tired or confused, have a rapid heartbeat, a weak pulse, dizziness or not have not passed urine for eight hours.

If you have severe dehydration you are likely to need treatment in hospital.

Treating dehydration

The best way to get your water balance back on track is to drink fluids such as water, diluted squash or diluted fruit juice. There can be very rare complications from drinking too much water, however this won't be a problem if you just drink your 6-8 glasses of fluid every day.

When you lose water from your body, you also lose salts and sugar so eating small amounts of sweet and salty food can help you to feel better. If you often become dehydrated, ask your pharmacist if they think a rehydration product would help you to keep the right balance of sugar and salts.





Useful contacts

NHS Inform

Call **0800 22 44 88** for health advice you can trust or see their website **www.nhsinform.scot**.

Health Protection Scotland

Health Protection Scotland have produced materials for their hydration campaign including a chart for recording water drunk and a healthy pee colour chart. You can find the resources on their website: **www.nss.nhs.scot/publications/national-hydration-campaign-materials/**

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How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- ▶ Call **03330 15 14 60**
- ▶ Visit **age.scot/donate**
- ▶ Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

* Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting [**age.scot/roundup**](https://age.scot/roundup)



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



[**/agescotland**](https://www.facebook.com/agescotland)



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Contact us:

Head office

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Age Scotland helpline

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Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk

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