



Staying hydrated is so important  
for children with hydrocephalus



# PLEASE REMIND ME TO DRINK MY WATER!

## What is hydrocephalus?

Hydrocephalus is an abnormal build-up of fluid within the brain. The excess fluid leads to increased pressure, and **if left untreated, can cause permanent damage to the brain.**

## Symptoms can include (but are not limited to):

### Infants:

- Unusually large head
- Rapid head growth
- Bulging/tense fontanelle (soft spot)
- Persistent vomiting
- Extreme sleepiness
- Poor feeding
- High-pitched cry
- Noticeable scalp veins
- Excessive irritability
- Eyes that are fixed looking downwards ("sunsetting")
- Developmental delays
- Seizures

### Toddlers and older children:

- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Extreme fatigue
- Irritability
- Poor appetite
- Blurred/double vision
- Problems with movement / balance / coordination
- Changes in personality or nursery/school performance
- Seizures

## What is the treatment?

The most common treatment for hydrocephalus is surgical placement of a shunt to reduce the pressure on the brain. A shunt is a thin plastic tube that drains excess fluid from the ventricles, to another part of the body (often the abdomen), where it is reabsorbed.

Whilst shunts are a very effective treatment for hydrocephalus, around half will fail within the first 2 years following placement, often due to a blockage. If a shunt isn't functioning properly, the pressure on the brain will rise again, leading to symptoms and signs similar to those listed above. If the shunt is infected, fever, redness or tenderness along the shunt tubing, and tummy pain may also be present.

**Children with symptoms and signs of shunt failure, require urgent medical care.**

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Find out more [www.harrys-hat.org](http://www.harrys-hat.org)

Harry's Hydrocephalus Awareness Trust (Harry's HAT) is a registered charity, number 1183086.

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about our  
campaign



**Please remind me  
to drink my water**



## **THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING WELL HYDRATED FOR CHILDREN WITH HYDROCEPHALUS**

### **Why is staying well hydrated so important for children with hydrocephalus?**

Children are more at risk of becoming dehydrated than adults and may need to be reminded to drink throughout the day – especially after exercise and during periods of hot weather.

This is particularly important for children with hydrocephalus, as the symptoms and signs of dehydration (e.g., headache, drowsiness, and irritability) can also be a sign of acute hydrocephalus and/or shunt failure.

To avoid dehydration and exacerbation of symptoms of hydrocephalus, parents/carers should encourage children drink plenty of fluids.

### **How much water?**



To stay well hydrated, the NHS recommend that children should aim to drink around 6-8 cups of fluid per day.

The amount of fluid per cup varies depending on the age of the child:

**Children under 5 years: 120-150 ml**

**Children aged 6+ years: 250-300 ml**

### **How can you help?**

Here at Harrys-hat.org we'd be very grateful if you made a pledge to buy one of our special water bottles.

This great item not only encourages kids of all ages to drink water but the proceeds go toward vital research, awareness campaigns, funding training, and the ever so important support of families affected by the condition.

**Even a simple share on social media makes a massive difference**



**Thank you**

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