

# Priority Topic: DEHYDRATION

## Key Features:

1. When assessing the acutely ill patient, look for [signs and symptoms of dehydration](#) (e.g., look for dehydration in the patient with a debilitating pneumonia).

### *What you should study:*

- ✓ [Diagnosing Dehydration 2016](#)

2. In the [dehydrated patient](#), assess the [degree of dehydration](#) using [reliable indicators](#) (e.g., vital signs) as some patients' hydration status may be more difficult to assess (e.g., elderly, very young, pregnant).

### *What you should study:*

- ✓ [Dehydration in Children AAFP 2009](#)
- ✓ [Oral Rehydration Therapy CPS 2016](#)
- ✓ [Effective Hydration in the Elderly](#)
- ✓ [Oral Rehydration in Children BC Guidelines 2010](#)

**The AAFP article describes how to perform capillary refill and skin turgor properly; the CPS article is otherwise a little better**

3. In a **dehydrated patient**,
- a) Determine the **appropriate volume of fluid** for replacement of deficiency and ongoing needs,
  - b) Use the **appropriate route** (oral if the patient is stable; IV when necessary).

### **What you should study:**

- ✓ Oral Rehydration Therapy CPS 2016
- ✓ Oral Rehydration Solutions AAFP-sponsored
- ✓ Oral Rehydration in Children BC Guidelines 2010

4. When treating **severe dehydration**, use **objective measures** (e.g., lab values) to direct ongoing management.

### **What you should study:**

- ✓ Diagnosis and Management of Sodium Disorders AAFP 2015

5. In a dehydrated patient,
- a) Identify the **precipitating illness or cause**, especially looking for non-gastrointestinal, including drug-related, causes.
  - b) **Treat the precipitating illness** concurrently.

6. Treat the **dehydrated pregnant** patient **aggressively**, as there are additional risks of dehydration in pregnancy.

## ***What you should study:***

- ✓ [Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy AAFP 2014](#)