

Hospital Hydration Best Practice Toolkit

9 How good are your water facilities?

Take a look at your existing drinking water facilities for yourself. Photocopy this check list and record your answers to the following:

- Do you have facilities available for drinking water provision?
- How many outlets / facilities are there?
- Are facilities situated in safe and suitable areas for nurses, doctors, caterers and patients?
- Are facilities clean and well maintained?
- Do patients have access to fresh water throughout the day?
- Can able bodied patients serve themselves?
- Can less able bodied patients serve themselves?
- Are clean cups and vessels provided?
- Would you be happy to drink solely from these facilities every day?
- Are facilities supplied with fresh water and visibly labelled as such?
- The water should taste fresh and palatable – taste it – is it?
- How much flow of water can you realistically expect to get from the facilities you have in place – a slow trickle, a glass, a jug, a plentiful supply? (underline as appropriate)

How did you do? – Is fresh and wholesome water available to your patients, staff and visitors throughout the day?

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FACTFILE – Facts and Tips on Providing Fresh Water

- The UK mains drinking water supply is safe to drink and of extremely high quality. Through strict regulation, the UK has one of the highest quality tap waters in the world.
- Make sure you always take your drinking water fresh from the mains water supply. (Facilities management can advise you if unsure).
- Avoid taking drinking water from taps that are fed by storage systems and tanks (as above).
- Every hospital building has access to fresh water somewhere in its infrastructure. Normally the tap in the kitchen will be the one providing fresh, wholesome and cool water.
- Provide a variety of options for patients to help themselves, and support it with freshly served water throughout the day.
- If you choose to use water coolers, mains fed systems are the most sustainable. They don't run out, are more cost effective, remove the health and safety concerns regarding the lifting and changing of replacement bottles and save the inconvenience of storing them.
- Mains fed water coolers are the best option for saving money. Bottle fed machines can cost healthcare providers around £6 for each 19 litre bottle or around £1000 each year to run each machine. The equivalent cost of supplying mains fed water through a cooler would be less than 2p for each 19 litres.
- Consider purchasing water coolers that serve both chilled water and water at its natural temperature.
- If you are not sure whether your water supply is safe or wholesome, contact your facilities management team, local water company, or the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Contact details are available through the web area of this Toolkit [HYPERLINK "http://www.waterforhealth.org.uk"](http://www.waterforhealth.org.uk) www.waterforhealth.org.uk