



Section of Colon and Rectal Surgery

Signs of Dehydration and Electrolyte Imbalances

- Fatigue, nausea, vomiting light headedness, dry mouth, stomach cramps, muscle cramps, decreased or dark urine, rapid weight loss, diarrhea or increased stoma output, increased thirst.
- Pinch test: pinch the skin on your forearm, if it remains a "tent" you may be dehydrated
- Sodium and Potassium (electrolytes) can become depleted when output is high.
 - **Sodium:**
 - Sodium (Na+) low: loss of appetite, abdominal cramping, drowsiness, faintness, cold feeling in arms and legs. (broth, low sugar sports drinks)
 - Foods to help replace sodium: canned soups and vegetables, broth and bouillon cubes, tomato sauce, snack chips (pretzels, salted crackers, potato chips), processed foods (cheeses, meats), canned fish (tuna, salmon), ready to eat cereal (instant oatmeal), table salt, ketchup, soy and BBQ sauces), V8 juice, sports drinks.

Be sure to check with your doctor before replacing sodium in your diet if you are on a sodium restricted diet.

- **Potassium**
 - Potassium (K+) low: fatigue, muscle weakness, gassy bloated feeling, shortness of breath, decreased sensation in arms and/or legs. (OJ, banana, low sugar sports drink, milk)
 - Foods to replace potassium: Potatoes, bananas, avocado, tomato sauce, paste, soup), melon (cantaloupe, honeydew), pumpkin, sweet potato, smooth nut butters (peanut, almond), brown sugar, molasses, maple syrup, chocolate, coffee, tea, coconut water, juices (orange, carrot, tomato, vegetable) sports drinks.

Fluids

- Drink a glass of water every time you empty your pouch.
- Drink 10-12 glasses of fluid a day. If drinking alcohol or caffeine replace each glass with an additional glass of water.
- Drinking coffee and tea increases urine and salt output.
- Wait 30-45 minutes after a meal to consume liquids (sipping with the meal is ok).]
- If drinking sports drinks for electrolyte replacement try diluting the drink with water 1 to 1 to reduce the amount of sugar preserving (ie: ½ cup water + ½ cup Gatorade).