

Every intravenous (IV) fluid decision matters

Key considerations for prescribers

Use these questions to guide decision-making for initiating, reviewing and/or ceasing IV fluids. For additional information refer to the [Commission's guidance on the safe, appropriate and sustainable use of IV fluids](#).

Start IV fluids deliberately

Before prescribing IV fluids, ask:

- Why does my patient need IV fluid therapy? What are the risks of IV fluid therapy for my patient? What is the clinical intent?
- Can oral or enteral routes be used instead?
- Is this the most appropriate IV fluid for the indication and is it suitable for my patient?
- What are the dose, duration and review/monitoring requirements?
- Have I accounted for all other sources of fluid intake?

Communicate and document

To support continuity of care, ask:

- Has it been possible to involve my patient in the decision-making?
- Is the IV fluid prescription complete?
- Is the IV fluid plan (including potential risks, duration and review/monitoring requirements) clearly documented?
- Have I informed relevant members of the multidisciplinary care team about the IV fluid plan and/or any changes to therapy?

Review proactively and avoid continuation by default

When reviewing IV fluid therapy, ask:

- Does my patient still need IV fluids? Is the original clinical intent still relevant?
- How has my patient responded to the IV fluid therapy?
- Are there any signs of harm to my patient from the IV fluid therapy?
- Can the IV fluid therapy be modified, stopped, or transitioned to oral hydration and/or oral medicines?
- Have I documented the review and communicated with members of the multidisciplinary care team?

Seek advice

When managing IV fluid therapy, ask:

- Do I need to access relevant clinical guidance tools and/or information on IV fluids and medicines, e.g. local guidelines, product information and/or medicine compatibility advice?
- Do I need to seek advice from a senior clinician?
- Have I engaged relevant members of the multidisciplinary care team?
- Do I need to raise concerns about the patient's response to therapy and/or potential risks or signs of harm?

These considerations support prescribers to apply the Start–Stop–Switch guiding principles for IV fluid therapy by ensuring IV fluids are started deliberately, reviewed proactively, and stopped or switched when no longer needed.

- **Start** appropriate IV fluids only when there is a clear clinical indication.
- **Stop** IV fluids as soon as they are no longer clinically required.
- **Switch** therapies based on clinical response, including modification of IV fluid regimens and timely transition to oral hydration and/or oral medicines as appropriate.

Need more information?

Scan the QR code to access the national guidance on the safe, appropriate and sustainable use of IV fluids.

The guidance includes additional information on:

- Applying the guiding principles in practice
- IV fluid selection
- Patient-specific considerations
- Monitoring and review
- Multidisciplinary team involvement to support safe use



For more information

Please visit: safetyandquality.gov.au/ivfluids

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