

Management of Dehydration - Signs of Clinical Dehydration

There are a myriad of signs and symptoms of dehydration. They include assessment of:

- General appearance
- Thirst
- Tears
- Status of mucous membranes
- Skin turgor
- Capillary refill
- Heart rate

Having a standard tool to evaluate dehydration would be helpful. However, there is a dearth of reports on the testing on tools of assessment to dehydration. Dehydration scales should be used in conjunction with other factors. The Clinical Dehydration Scale (CDS) has been selected by CMH as the scoring system to assess dehydration. It is recommended as one factor when deciding care of the patient who presents with acute gastroenteritis (Guarino et al., 2004)

These guidelines do not establish a standard of care to be followed in every case. It is recognized that each case is different and those individuals involved in providing health care are expected to use their judgment in determining what is in the best interests of the patient based on the circumstances existing at the time. It is impossible to anticipate all possible situations that may exist and to prepare guidelines for each. Accordingly these guidelines should guide care with the understanding that departures from them may be required at times.