Clinical dehydration

- Appears to be unwell or deteriorating
- Tachypnoea
- Altered responsiveness (for example, irritable, lethargic)
- Decreased level of consciousness
- Sunken eyes
- Reduced skin turgor

These children are at increased risk of dehydration:

- children younger than 1 year, especially those younger than 6 months
- infants who were of low birth weight
- children who have passed six or more diarrhoeal stools in the past 24 hours
- children who have vomited three times or more in the past 24 hours
- children who have not been offered or have not been able to tolerate supplementary fluids before presentation
- infants who have stopped breastfeeding during the illness
- children with signs of malnutrition

Clinical dehydration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No clinically detectable dehydration</th>
<th>Clinical dehydration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alert and responsive</td>
<td>Alert and responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moist mucous membranes (except after drink)</td>
<td>Dry mucous membranes (except for ‘mouth breather’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin colour unchanged</td>
<td>Skin colour unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal blood pressure</td>
<td>Normal blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal peripheral pulses</td>
<td>Normal peripheral pulses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm extremities</td>
<td>Warm extremities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal capillary refill time</td>
<td>Normal capillary refill time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preventing dehydration

- Continue breastfeeding and other milk fluids
- Encourage fluid intake
- Discourage fruit juices and carbonated drinks (especially in children at increased risk of dehydration)
- Offer low osmolarity ORS solution as supplemental fluid if at increased risk of dehydration.

Advise parents and carers to contact a healthcare professional if:

- symptoms of dehydration develop
- symptoms do not resolve as expected
- their child refuses to drink ORS solution or persistently vomits