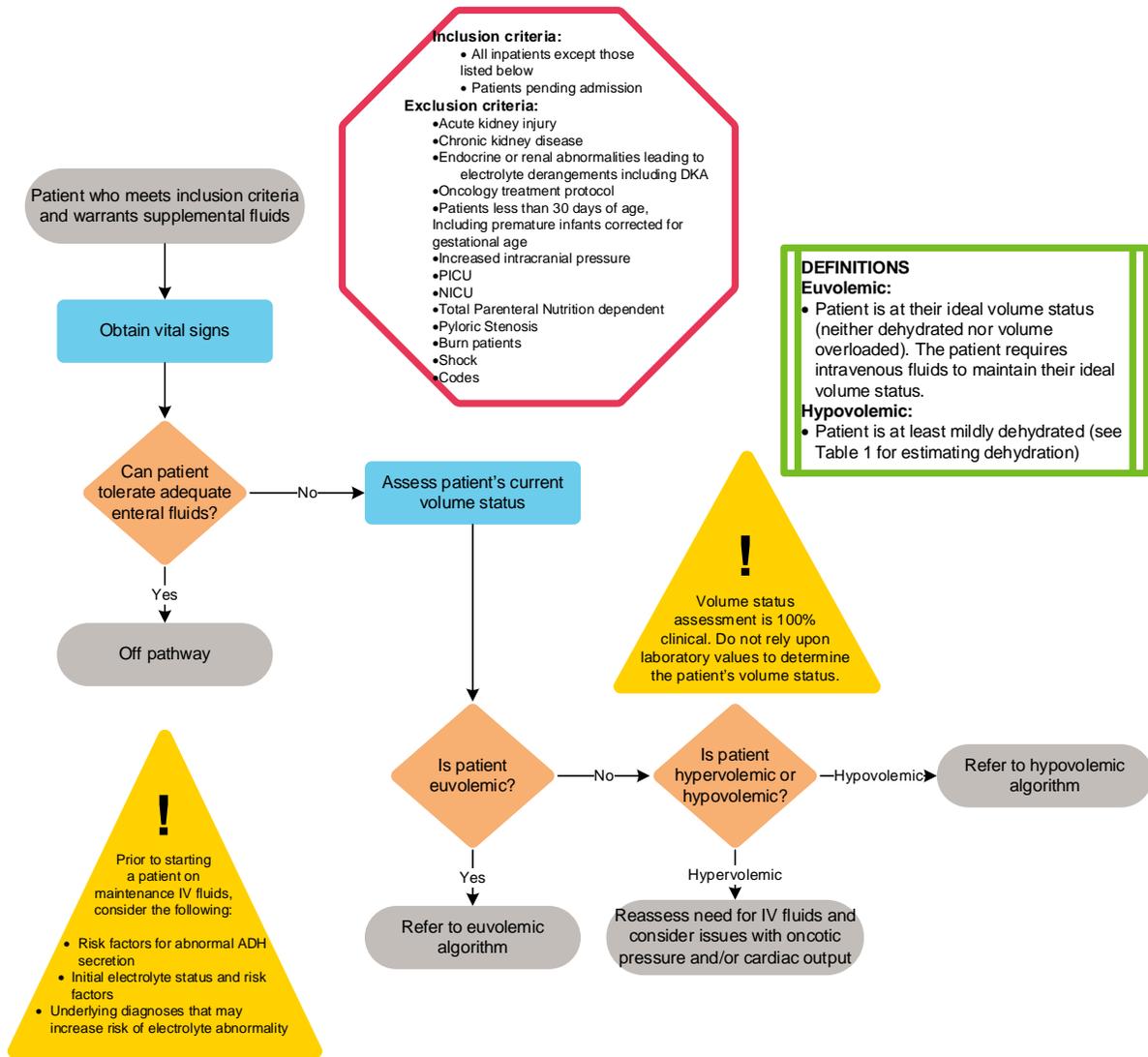


# INTRAVENOUS FLUID THERAPY –

## ALGORITHM 1. Assessment of Overall Fluid Status



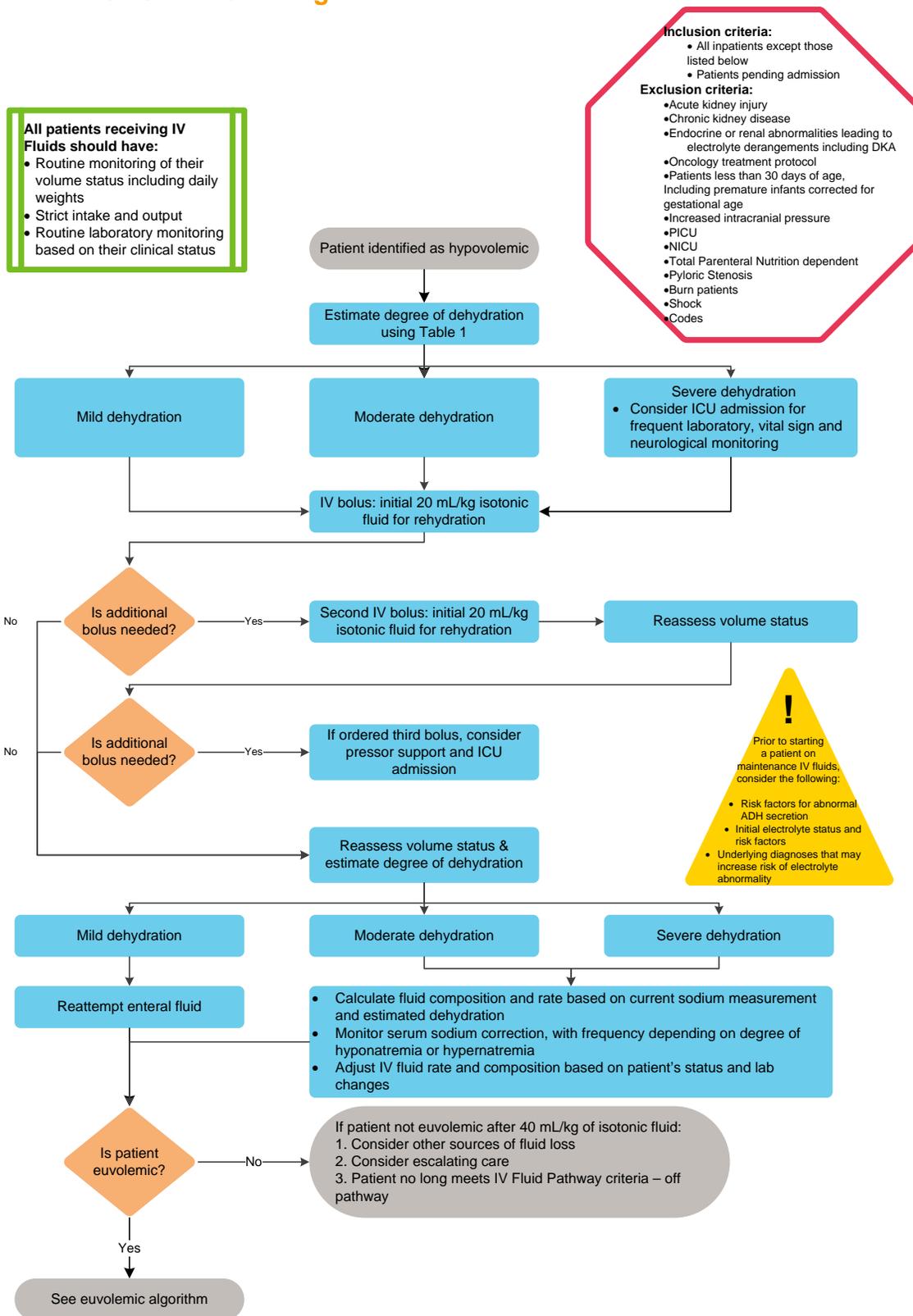
**Table 1. Dehydration Status Estimation**

Signs and Symptoms	Degree of Dehydration		
	None or Mild	Moderate	Severe
<b>General Condition</b>			
<b>Infants</b>	Thirsty; alert; restless	Lethargic or drowsy	Limp; cold, cyanotic extremities; may be comatose
<b>Children</b>	Thirsty; alert; restless	Alert; postural dizziness	Apprehensive; cold, cyanotic extremities; muscle cramps
<b>Quality of radial pulse</b>	Normal	Thready or weak	Feeble or impalpable
<b>Quality of respiration</b>	Normal	Deep	Deep and rapid
<b>Skin elasticity</b>	Pinch retracts immediately	Pinch retracts slowly	Pinch retracts very slowly (>2 sec)
<b>Eyes</b>	Normal	Sunken	Very sunken
<b>Tears</b>	Present	Absent	Absent
<b>Mucous membranes</b>	Moist	Dry	Very Dry
<b>Urine output (by report of parent)</b>	Normal	Reduced	None passed in many hours

Adapted from Gorelick MH, Shaw KN, Murphy KO. Validity and Reliability of Clinical Signs in the Diagnosis of Dehydration in Children. *Pediatrics*. 1995;99(5):1-6.

# INTRAVENOUS FLUID THERAPY –

## Algorithm 2. HYPOVOLEMIC Management



# INTRAVENOUS FLUID THERAPY –

## Algorithm 3. EUVOLEMIC Management

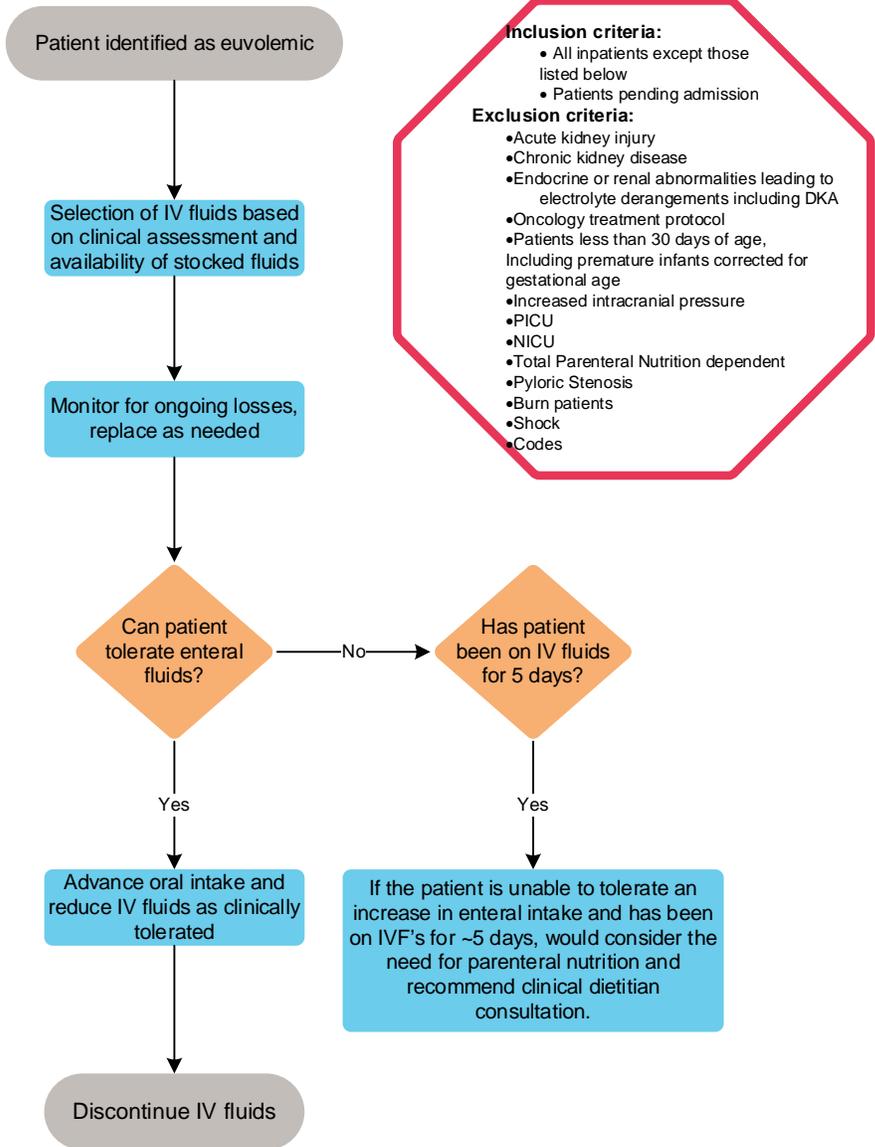
**Stocked Fluids (D5LR, D5NS, or Plasmalyte)\***

- Isotonic fluids are preferred
- Certain patients may benefit from Plasma-Lyte (if available) over LR. The use of Plasma-Lyte vs LR may be determined by the child's ability to maintain serum glucose with or without IV dextrose. Plasma-Lyte contains no dextrose. D5 and D10 LR are available.
- After determining stocked fluid of either D5LR, D5NS, or Plasmalyte, the rate can be calculated utilizing the Holliday-Segar method, also known as "4-2-1", with a maximum suggested rate of 120 mL/hr.

\*D5 1/2 NS + 20 KCl in children less than 1 year

**All patients receiving IV Fluids should have:**

- Routine monitoring of their volume status including daily weights
- Strict intake and output
- Routine laboratory monitoring based on their clinical status



**Inclusion criteria:**

- All inpatients except those listed below
- Patients pending admission

**Exclusion criteria:**

- Acute kidney injury
- Chronic kidney disease
- Endocrine or renal abnormalities leading to electrolyte derangements including DKA
- Oncology treatment protocol
- Patients less than 30 days of age, including premature infants corrected for gestational age
- Increased intracranial pressure
- PICU
- NICU
- Total Parenteral Nutrition dependent
- Pyloric Stenosis
- Burn patients
- Shock
- Codes

**!**

Prior to starting a patient on maintenance IV fluids, consider the following:

- Risk factors for abnormal ADH secretion
- Initial electrolyte status and risk factors
- Underlying diagnoses that may increase risk of electrolyte abnormality

**!**

Ongoing assessment for signs of dehydration:

- Dry mouth and tongue
- Crying without tears
- Decreased urine output
- Delayed capillary refill
- Poor skin turgor
- Weight loss

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# INTRAVENOUS FLUID THERAPY CLINICAL PATHWAY

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## TARGET POPULATION

### Inclusion Criteria

- All inpatients except those listed below
- Patients pending admission

### Exclusion Criteria

- Acute kidney injury
  - Chronic renal failure
  - Endocrine or renal abnormalities leading to electrolyte derangements including DKA
  - Oncology treatment protocol
  - Patients less than 30 days of age including premature infants corrected for gestational age
  - Increased intracranial pressure
  - PICU
  - NICU
  - Total parenteral nutrition dependent
  - Pyloric stenosis
  - Shock
  - Codes
  - Burn patients (Burn patients require increased fluid repletion and have separate IV Fluids protocol)
-

## BACKGROUND | DEFINITIONS

Intravenous maintenance fluid therapy consists of water and electrolytes to replace daily losses in ill children in whom enteral fluids are insufficient. Based on the Holliday-Segar formula, hypotonic fluids have been widely used in pediatrics for several decades.<sup>1</sup> However, accumulating evidence shows that using hypotonic fluids may lead to an increased risk of hyponatremia.<sup>2,3</sup> Studies have been limited by a significant number of surgical patients and varying intravenous fluid (IVF) regimens including fluids containing less than ½ normal saline (NS). Besides the use of hypotonic fluids, many hospitalized children are felt to have non-osmotic stimuli for anti-diuretic secretion (e.g. post-surgical patients, respiratory infections, neurologic disease) which leads to a decrease in free water excretion and may contribute to hyponatremia.<sup>1</sup> Symptomatic hyponatremia manifests as central nervous system symptoms including lethargy, irritability, weakness, seizures, coma, and even death. These clinical care recommendations were developed with the aim of decreasing iatrogenic complications from intravenous fluids in hospitalized children.

Normal saline (0.9% sodium chloride), which has been a life-saving treatment over the past century, has been found to have downsides including increased mortality rates, increased acute kidney injury (AKI), metabolic acidosis, and coagulopathy.<sup>6-12</sup> This is thought to be attributed to the excess amount of chloride (154mmol/L) which is supraphysiologic compared to normal patient serum values. Growing evidence shows that elevated chloride values are associated with worse outcomes including AKI and mortality<sup>13-15</sup>. Due to this rising awareness, there has been development and increased use of balanced crystalloid solutions, such as lactated Ringer’s (LR) and Plasma-Lyte. The electrolyte composition of these fluids is shown below:

Fluid Type	Patient Plasma	Lactated Ringer’s (LR) <sup>17</sup>	NS (0.9% sodium chloride) <sup>16</sup>	½ NS (0.45% sodium chloride)	Plasma-Lyte <sup>18</sup>
Balanced vs Unbalanced crystalloid		Balanced	Unbalanced	Unbalanced	Balanced
Osmolality (mOsm/Kg)	275-295	273	308	154	295
pH	7.35-7.45	6.5	5	5	7.4
Sodium (mmol/L)	135-145	130	154	77	140
Potassium (mmol/L)	3.4-4.7	4	0	0	5
Chloride (mmol/L)	96-109	109	154	77	98
Magnesium (mEq/L)	1.3-2	0	0	0	3
Acetate (mmol/L)	0	0	0	0	27
Gluconate (mmol/L)	0	0	0	0	23
Lactate (mmol/L)	0	28	0	0	0
Calcium (mEq/L)	4.4-5.2	3	0	0	0
Bicarbonate (mmol/L)	23-30	0	0	0	0

**What about the potassium?** Clearly, both the balanced crystalloid solutions contain a small amount of potassium. **Somewhat counterintuitively, these crystalloids reduce the risk of hyperkalemia when compared to the use of 0.9% sodium chloride in patients with reduced kidney function<sup>9, 19-23</sup>.** Hyperchloremic acidosis from 0.9% sodium chloride leads to efflux of potassium out of the cells, predisposing to hyperkalemia. In contrast, the balanced electrolyte composition from LR and Plasma-Lyte allows the cell to maintain potassium buffering. There is a risk of hypokalemia with these fluids, which is mitigated by the potassium within the fluids.

**What about the sodium?** The amount of sodium should also be considered, which may be particularly relevant in some children: children with traumatic brain injury who are at risk of cerebral edema should not receive hyponatremic fluids such as lactated Ringer’s or deD5W. Children at risk of syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion (SIADH) should be monitored closely for the development of hyponatremia while receiving intravenous fluids. All children receiving intravenous fluids should undergo routine monitoring of their volume status via strict intake and output and daily weights.

**What about the base anions?** The balanced crystalloid solutions also contain different types of anions: acetate, gluconate, and lactate. In patients without severe liver dysfunction, lactate is converted to bicarbonate and glucose and should have no effect on patients' lactate values. Acetate and gluconate are also bicarbonate precursors and are metabolized both in the liver as well as other tissues<sup>24</sup>.

## Definitions

- Hyponatremia: serum sodium (Na) less than or equal to 135 mEq/L
- Hypotonic fluids: fluids with a lower osmotic pressure than blood (e.g. dextrose 5% in 0.45% sodium chloride [D5 ½ NS], dextrose 5% in 0.225% sodium chloride [D5 ¼ NS])<sup>3</sup>
- Isotonic fluids: fluids with osmotic pressure equal to blood (e.g. Plasma-Lyte, dextrose 5% in 0.9% sodium chloride [D5 NS])
- Balanced fluids: fluids with an electrolyte composition that more closely resembles human plasma (e.g., lactated Ringer's [LR], Plasma-Lyte, dextrose 5% in lactated Ringer's [D5 LR], dextrose 10% in lactated Ringer's [D10 LR])\*\*Note: Plasma-Lyte does not contain dextrose and cannot be added to this fluid.
- Hypovolemia: The provider has assessed the patient's volume status (based on history and physical exam findings) and determined that the patient is at least mildly dehydrated (see Table 1 for estimating degree of dehydration).
- Euvolemia: The provider has assessed the patient's volume status (based on history and physical exam findings) and determined that the patient is at their ideal volume status (neither dehydrated nor volume overloaded). The patient, therefore, requires intravenous fluids to *maintain* their ideal volume status rather than for repletion purposes.

## CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

- Vital signs on admission
- Prior to implementing either the euvolemic or hypovolemic IVF algorithm, the provider must first assess: 1) whether the patient may be able to attempt enteral hydration and 2) the patient's current volume status.
- Evaluate hydration status clinically. **NOTE: Volume status assessment is 100% clinical. Do not rely upon laboratory values to determine the patient's volume status.**
- Patients who have certain renal, endocrinological, neurological, and cardiac pathology may not be appropriate candidates for the algorithm and provider discretion should be used.
- Reassess hydration needs regularly and re-evaluate the need for IV fluids with any clinical change; this includes, but is not limited to:
  - Loss of intravenous access
  - Liberalization of enteral intake
  - Time-limited NPO status (e.g. pre-anesthesia)
  - Change in urine output (polyuria or oliguria) or stool output
  - Change in weight
- Consider alternative assessments of urine output (e.g. bladder scan) prior to IV fluid boluses when patients otherwise appear euvolemic.

## CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

- After determining that the patient is unable to tolerate enteral hydration, the patient's hydration status should be assessed clinically to determine whether the euvolemic or hypovolemic IVF algorithm is appropriate.
- Hypovolemic patients requiring IVF's:
  - For hypovolemic (dehydrated) patients, their degree of dehydration should first be estimated by the provider via the history and physical exam.

- Most mildly dehydrated patients will respond well to a bolus (10-20 mL/kg) of crystalloid (LR or NS), following standard bolus procedures.
- Moderately and severely dehydrated patients will require calculation of fluid composition and rate based on their current serum sodium measurement and % estimated dehydration.
  - Providers should utilize resources such as Harriet Lane. **Regardless of the resource utilized, all initial fluid calculations are estimations only and frequent laboratory monitoring and clinical judgement must be utilized to adjust the fluid prescription appropriately and in a timely fashion.**
  - Appropriate monitoring of serum sodium correction must be monitored, with frequency depending on the severity of dehydration and degree of hyponatremia or hypernatremia. The IVF rate and composition must be adjusted based on the patient's status and laboratory changes.
  - Severely dehydrated patients will benefit from ICU admission for frequent laboratory, vital sign, and neurological monitoring.
- Euvolemic patients requiring IVF's:
  - For euvolemic patients who qualify for the pathway, isotonic fluids such as lactated Ringer's (LR) or Plasma-lyte are preferred over normal saline.
    - The use of LR versus Plasma-Lyte may be determined by whether the child is able to maintain their serum glucose with dextrose in the fluids. (Plasma-Lyte does not include dextrose, whereas LR can be ordered as D5 LR or D10 LR.)
  - After determining the composition of the balanced crystalloid, the rate can be calculated utilizing the Holliday-Segar method, also known as "4-2-1," with a maximum suggested rate of 120 mL/hr.

Per Kilogram of weight	Fluid Rate
1-10 kg	4 mL/kg/hr
11-20 kg	2 mL/kg/hr
Greater than 20 kg	1 mL/kg/hr

Example: A 22 kg patient's rate would be 62 mL/hr (40 mL/hr + 20 mL/hr + 2 mL/hr)

- *NOTE:* Patients who have increased insensible losses and/or increased ongoing losses from other sources (e.g. urinary, stool, ostomy output) will require more than the estimated Holliday-Segar rate. Replacements should not be included in the "maintenance" calculation and should be replaced with an appropriate fluid composition on an as-needed basis.

**Table 1. Dehydration Status Estimation<sup>27</sup>**

Signs and Symptoms	Degree of Dehydration		
	None or Mild	Moderate	Severe
<b>General Condition</b>			
<b>Infants</b>	Thirsty; alert; restless	Lethargic or drowsy	Limp; cold, cyanotic extremities; may be comatose
<b>Children</b>	Thirsty; alert; restless	Alert; postural dizziness	Apprehensive; cold, cyanotic extremities; muscle cramps
<b>Quality of radial pulse</b>	Normal	Thready or weak	Feeble or impalpable
<b>Quality of respiration</b>	Normal	Deep	Deep and rapid
<b>Skin elasticity</b>	Pinch retracts immediately	Pinch retracts slowly	Pinch retracts very slowly (>2 sec)
<b>Eyes</b>	Normal	Sunken	Very sunken
<b>Tears</b>	Present	Absent	Absent
<b>Mucous membranes</b>	Moist	Dry	Very Dry
<b>Urine output (by report of parent)</b>	Normal	Reduced	None passed in many hours

- Regardless of the algorithm, all children receiving IVF's should have routine monitoring of their volume status, including daily weights, strict intake and output, and routine laboratory monitoring based on their clinical status.

## MONITORING

- Vital signs per provider order
- Document strict intake and output
- Document daily weight
- Ongoing assessment for signs of dehydration
  - Dry mouth and tongue
  - Crying without tears
  - Tachycardia
  - Decreased urine output
  - Delayed capillary refill
  - Poor skin turgor
  - Weight loss
- Observe for clinical signs of hyponatremia
  - Lethargy
  - Irritability
  - Weakness
  - Seizures

## FLUIDS, ELECTROLYTES, NUTRITION

- Consider enteral fluids (oral, nasogastric [NG]) before administering IV fluids. In some cases, an NG may be preferable to IV fluids, but this decision should be based upon the provider's clinical assessment.
- NG feeds have been safely used in infants hospitalized with bronchiolitis.<sup>4</sup>
- **Selection of Intravenous Fluids**
  - Balanced fluids (those most closely resembling the electrolyte composition of plasma) should be used preferentially over hypotonic or isotonic fluids for routine fluid maintenance therapy.
    - Lactated Ringer's is the preferred option, but consideration must be given to the presence of calcium in LR, which may interact with other medications which are being administered to the patient (e.g. ceftriaxone). LR can be ordered to contain dextrose in patients who may not otherwise be able to maintain their serum glucose.
    - Plasma-Lyte, when available, is another option used preferentially in higher risk children who may benefit from a more physiologic intravenous fluid due to its close approximation to serum electrolyte composition and osmolality. Because Plasma-Lyte does not contain glucose, however, consideration must be given to the patient's ability to maintain their serum glucose.
    - Hypotonic saline (those containing D5 ½ NS) can be considered as another alternative to normal saline (NS), however patients may be at higher risk for developing hyponatremia. Patients on the hypovolemic pathway will likely require hypotonic fluid repletion in order to correct their deficits in addition to their ongoing maintenance requirement. Careful attention should be paid to these calculations, and close monitoring of the patient's response to therapy and clinical status is recommended.

- *NOTE:* The use of fluids containing less than ½ NS should not be used to provide routine fluid maintenance therapy. There are rare clinical instances where the use of these fluids (e.g. D5 ¼ NS or D5W) is warranted.
- *NOTE:* The use of plain ½ NS without dextrose as routine fluid maintenance therapy is **discouraged due to the low osmolality** (154 mOsm/kg) and increased risk for hemolysis, convulsions, pulmonary edema, and water intoxication.<sup>25,26</sup> Consider LR or ¾ NS (0.675% sodium chloride) if non-dextrose containing fluids with a lower sodium content are indicated.
- Normal saline (NS), an unbalanced isotonic solution, remains widely available. Patients should be monitored for the development of hyperchloremic metabolic acidosis, acute kidney injury, fluid overload and hypertension.
- **Addition of dextrose to IVF is optional**, but is recommended for patients who are undernourished or less than 12 months of age.
- The addition of 10-20 mEq/L of potassium to unbalanced crystalloids (e.g. NS) may be warranted. Balanced crystalloids generally do not require additional potassium supplementation (LR contains 4 mEq/L of potassium and Plasma-lyte contains 5 mEq/L of potassium).
- Advance oral intake and reduce IVF as clinically tolerated.
- For euvolemic patients with anticipated discontinuation of IVF in the morning, consider stopping IV fluids overnight (e.g. 4:00am).
- If the patient is unable to increase enteral intake and has been on IVF's for 5 days, consideration for parenteral nutrition is warranted.

## LABORATORY STUDIES | IMAGING

- Electrolyte testing may be necessary for patients on prolonged maintenance IV fluids. The need for testing and frequency of testing should be determined by assessing the risk of significant electrolyte abnormality, changes in clinical status, volume status, and the possibility that the patient will remain on IV fluids for a prolonged time period.
- Initial testing for electrolytes can help assess this baseline risk of electrolyte abnormality through understanding kidney function and initial serum electrolyte levels. A careful evaluation for any history or signs and symptoms that may increase risk of electrolyte abnormality is important. Certain conditions such as SIADH, diabetes insipidus, traumatic brain injury, adrenal insufficiency, recent surgery, or the use of chronic medications with high risk of electrolyte abnormality such as diuretics or mineralocorticoids may place a patient into a higher-risk category, which may require more frequent checking of serum electrolytes.
- In the absence of these risk factors, a low-risk, non-complex patient on balanced crystalloid or isotonic solutions for maintenance IV fluids, checking electrolytes **no more** than every 2 days will provide adequate information for monitoring the impact on a patient's overall status. In addition, daily weights, strict intake and output, and physical exams to assess for signs/symptoms of fluid retention are easy methods to evaluate a patient's overall fluid status.
- Discontinuing maintenance IV fluids as soon as clinically indicated is one method to further reduce any risk of hyponatremia or hypernatremia or other electrolyte abnormalities. Since higher volumes of fluid are generally associated with higher risks of electrolyte abnormality, reducing the dose volume of maintenance fluids to only what is necessary through the use of Total Fluid Orders and conservative dosing rates can further reduce the risk of electrolyte abnormality.
- If serum Na is less than 130 mEq/L or greater than 150 mEq/L, obtain repeat electrolytes based on the acuity of the abnormality and the patient's clinical status until corrected.

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Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee - August 2019  
 Clinical Pathways and Measures Committee - November 2019

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**REVIEW/REVISION SCHEDULE**

Scheduled for full review on February 10, 2024

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