



## Infection Prevention Team Newsletter June 2023

As summer is fast approaching and we head outside for activities and BBQs it is essential we do this safely. The ways we can do this are by:

**Hand Hygiene:** is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Hand hygiene has dual role in protecting both residents and staff member from microorganisms which may cause harm. Hands may look clean but invisible microorganisms are always present.

**Animals in care settings:** There is no doubt that pets living in care settings or animals coming into care settings for a visit bring joy and happiness to many. However, it is important to adhere to some rules and carry out a risk assessment prior to visits in and out of care setting. Animals do come with infection risks and reducing these is important all residents and staff perform hand hygiene after touching animals especially before eating.

**Food handling:** In warm weather there is no doubt it is lovely to be sat outside with good food, company, and a cold drink however, it is easy to allow our food standards to slip and harm to be caused with infections such as campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria and E.coli infection at their highest. If you are heading outside for a [Picnic](#) or [BBQ](#) follow the safety guidance in the [links](#).

**Good Hydration:** is essential for residents as poor hydration can lead to existing health conditions being exacerbated and new infections such as UTIs and can result in acute kidney infection. A person's thirst response can diminish with age and with some health conditions such as dementia. Water is the largest component of the human body, making up between 50% and 80% and plays a vital role in most bodily functions. Dehydration happens when more fluid is used or lost from the body and if this fluid is not replaced the body will not have enough water and other fluids to carry out normal bodily functions.

It is essential to check for signs of dehydration for example dark coloured urine ([see this guide](#)), urine should be clear to pale yellow, dryness in the mouth, lips and tongue, sunken eyes, reduced skin elasticity, drowsiness, confusion and low blood pressure. These signs can also be symptoms of other illnesses, but you should be aware of them. Please ensure regular documentation of food and fluids to ensure residents are being encouraged to consume enough fluids.

**How to support fluid intake:** Encourage regular small drinks, ensure you know residents' preference for fluids it is not just water that counts towards fluid intake. Fruit juice, cordials, Bovril, Horlicks, smoothies. Tea and coffee that are decaffeinated are recommended due to caffeine encouraging the bladder to make urine faster. Another way to support residents is encouraging eating foods with high water content such as strawberries, melon, cucumber, soups, and yogurts. Residents could make their own lollies with fruit and juices! NHS dehydration [link](#).

**Water safety:** Please ensure all hosepipes and air conditioning units are serviced and well maintained to avoid water borne infections such as legionaries' disease. All pipe work should be serviced and flushed on a regular basis and maintained please ensure risk assessments are in place and regular service plans are in place before using appliances. Policy available on Westmorland and Furness internet website.

**Training Programme:** In addition to the training programme currently provided by the IPC team we would like your suggestions on topics and content you would like us to include. Please take a moment to tell us [here](#)