PROCEDURE 15-2 Calculating Weight Loss

**Purpose**
- To contribute to the assessment of a child’s fluid and electrolyte imbalance, particularly fluid loss

**Equipment**
- Calibrated scale
- Documentation of child’s previous weight

**Interventions**
1. Perform preparatory steps (see icon bar).
2. Review documentation of the child’s previous weight.
3. Weigh the child on a calibrated scale in the same manner as the child was weighed previously (e.g., without shoes or with clothes; before or after meals; and using the same scale if available). Changing these variables can give a false reading about changes in weight.
4. Subtract the child’s current weight from the previous weight.
5. Divide this value by the child’s previous weight to obtain the percentage of weight loss. For example:

   Previous weight: 25 lb
   Current weight: 20 lb

   
   \[
   \frac{25 - 20}{25} = 0.20 = 20\% 
   \]

   Weight loss: 5 lb
   Percent weight loss: 20%

**SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION**

(date) 0800 5-year-old male child. Admission weight 40 lb. Current weight, day 5 of hospitalization, 38 lb.
Percent weight loss = 5%.

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**Fluid Requirements in Children and Oral Rehydration**

**Fluid Requirements**
- Fluid requirements for children are calculated by weight (see Chapter 13).
- Children weighing 2.2 to 22 pounds (1–10 kg) should receive 100 mL/kg of fluid daily.
- Children weighing 22 to 44 pounds (10–20 kg) should receive 1,000 mL plus 50 mL/kg over 10 kg per day.
- Children weighing more than 44 pounds (20 kg) should receive 1,500 mL plus 20 mL/kg over 20 kg per day.

**Oral Rehydration Amounts**
- Fluids are given by mouth in small amounts frequently, for example, 1 to 2 tsp (5–10 mL) every 10 to 15 minutes. Continue giving oral fluids even if the child vomits because some of the fluid might be absorbed.
- For mild dehydration, the child should be given almost 1 fluid ounce per pound (50 mL/kg) of body weight every 4 hours, plus the amount of fluid lost by vomiting and/or diarrhea during the same time.
- For moderate dehydration, the child should be given about 2 fluid ounces per pound (100 mL/kg) of body weight every 4 hours plus the amount lost through emesis and/or stool.
- For severe dehydration, the child is hospitalized, and fluids are given intravenously.