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Children's Hydration in Summer

By Dietitian Caitlin Dillon-Smith



Our bodies are made up of approximately 70 percent water. Water has many important functions in the body. The body needs to have enough fluid to be able to function at its best. The body loses water throughout the day when you sweat, breathe and urinate. It is important to replace the water you have lost to prevent dehydration.

Children are at risk of dehydration, especially in hot weather and when they are exercising. By the time they feel thirsty, they are probably already dehydrated – so it's up to parents and carers to make sure they are drinking enough.

What does your child need?

Water is the best choice for children.

The recommended daily intake of fluid (including water, milk and other drinks) for children is:

1–3yrs: 1L per day (approx. 4 cups)

4–8yrs: 1.2L per day (approx. 5 cups)

Children need even more water when they are exercising.

SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION



DIZZINESS



DRY MOUTH



DARK URINE



HEADACHE



THIRST



FATIGUE



Tips to help children stay hydrated

- Make sure they always pack a water bottle
- Choose water rather than sugary drinks
- Encourage children to drink water before, after and during physical activity
- Always offer water with meals and snacks
- Encourage children to drink water, even if they don't like it!



Tips for kids who don't like water

- Try adding slices of fruits such as lemon or orange to water, for variety and flavour.
- Let your kids choose their own drink bottle or serve water in colourful glasses or jugs.
- Be a role model! Make a point of drinking water with your kids.
- Experiment with temperature; try having a jug of water in the fridge, adding ice-cubes, or even warm water in winter.

Foods that hydrate

Foods also have water content. Providing foods that have a high water content can assist with hydration. Food items such as ice cream, custards, icy-poles, soups, jelly and yoghurts have high water content and can assist in ensuring adequate hydration.

References:

Nutrient reference values. <https://www.nrv.gov.au/nutrients/water>

Hydration tips for children. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/hydration-tips-for-children>



Need help with making healthy lifestyle choices for the children in your care?

This article was written by Dietitian, Caitlin Dillon-Smith.

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