

Water, Water everywhere and lots and lots to drink: the importance of staying hydrated in the summer

By Ida Zelaya

Summer is just around the corner, which means school's out soon and fun in the sun is on every child's mind. When it comes to your kids and their physical activities, we know how important it is to keep children hydrated, and what it takes to prevent them from becoming dehydrated.

What can kids drink to stay hydrated?

Plain, filtered water is the only liquid that truly hydrates the body.



Sports drinks, fruit punch, fruit juice, iced tea, iced coffee drinks, soda, lemonade and all the other favorite beverages can contain sugar, artificial colors, artificial flavors, corn syrup, caffeine or other ingredients that your body must first digest or process before any water can be delivered to the cells. Since digestion requires water, you're most likely draining your own water stores in the process, contributing to your own dehydration.

Since water isn't digested, it provides the hydrating power boost quicker and more efficiently than any other beverage.

How much water should we drink to stay hydrated?

Water regulates the body's temperature and without a sufficient level of hydration, especially during the summer, our kids can easily overheat. But how much water should they be drinking? To stay hydrated, you and your kids should be drinking approximately 50% of their body weight in ounces every day. That equates to 60 ounces of water per day for a child weighing 120 pounds. Your children could easily lose up to 2 or more quarts of water daily, and that's under normal activity. Once they get involved in more intense play during the summer, they could need more.

Staying hydrated doesn't mean drinking all your water in one gulp!

It's all about continuous hydration, where your child should be drinking at least 8 ounces of water during and after their activities, and consistently sipping throughout the day. The body needs constant replenishment.

Does it matter what kind of bottle we use?

With the concerns about BPA or Biphenol A leaching from the plastic water bottles, I recommend reusable bottles that you can fill with your own filtered water, like a stainless steel bottle (not aluminum), a BPA-free plastic bottle, or a hydration pack for long hikes or bike rides. My preference is the Vacuum Insulated Hydration Bottle from Thermos www.thermos.com. It fits easily into the side pockets of a backpack and is insulated, so it keeps water cold for 12 hours. We've owned ours for over three years and saved quite a lot of money vs. buying water bottles from the store.



Hydration Tips:

Here are some tips to make sure you drink more water and some things you may or may not have known about water:

- Always take a water bottle with you.
- Camps and other providers of summer fun should provide hydration opportunities throughout the day and promote water, and not ‘bug juice’ as their beverage of choice.
- Although cold water is more appealing in the summer, room temperature water gets into your system quicker because your body does not need to warm it up. This can speed up hydration and help you feel energized more quickly!
- It’s a great idea to invest in a water filter, like the Premium 10-stage Filter from New Wave Enviro www.newwaveenviro.com. You can also purchase BPA-free and stainless steel bottles there. Or, for more fine-tuned filtration, try a reverse-osmosis filter.
- Because water aids in metabolism, drinking plenty of it will eliminate toxins.
- Drink at least 50% of your body weight in ounces every day.
- Drink a glass of water before meals. A lot of times you may feel hungry when in fact your body is just asking for a drink of water.

The Importance of Hydration

In view of the fact that the average body’s water content amounts to approximately 12 gallons and that our average daily consumption of water should be approximately 50% of your body weight in ounces, it is interesting to note that your body is made up of: -

- The blood consisting of 90% water.
- Your brain cells consist of 85% water.
- The kidneys consist of 82% water.
- Muscles consist of 75% water.
- The total body mass consists of 71% water.
- The liver consists of 69% water.
- The bones consist of 22 % water

Some Hydration Facts

- In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger pangs.
- Even MILD dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%.
- A lack of water is the “Number one” trigger of daytime fatigue.
- A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen.
- Adequate Hydration ensures the lubrication and cushioning of joints, prevents dry eyes, lubricates the spinal cord, and aids in body-temperature
- Don’t wait until you are thirsty to drink water as by the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated and have probably lost in the vicinity of two or more glasses of your total body water.

- Dark circles under the eyes may indicate dehydration.
- Drinking adequate amounts of good water helps prevent urinary tract infections, both for men and women.
- Don't substitute caffeinated coffees, teas and sodas for your daily water intake as caffeine acts as a diuretic, causing you to lose water through increased urination. Alcoholic beverages have a similar effect.
- Start and end your day with a serving of water.

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