

HEALTH &
NUTRITION

Encourage children to
DRINK MORE WATER

In the scramble to adopt healthy lifestyles and nutritious diets, most parents tend to ignore the critical importance of encouraging children to drink more water for maintaining good health and well-being

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The familiar advice: drink eight to ten glasses of water a day is drilled into our heads in childhood and later. But in the scramble to adopt healthy lifestyles and nutritious diets, most parents tend to ignore the critical importance of encouraging children to drink more water for health and well-being. Water shapes 70 percent of every human body. It regulates body temperature, assists digestion and waste excretion. But through the day when you sweat, breathe and

urinate, the body loses water. Therefore, to prevent dehydration it is important to replace lost water.

Children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults because in relation to their size, they have a larger proportion of skin to lose sweat. Moreover, children are young and playful and don't always realise they're thirsty, and need to be constantly encouraged to drink water.

Though paediatricians and health experts recommend that children between the ages of 5-8 should drink at



five glasses per day, this advice is rarely heeded. A recent survey conducted by the Mumbai-based Association of Primary Education and Research (APER) found that 68 percent of school children bring nearly empty water bottles home, indicating that they don't drink enough water in school. The study, for which 900 teachers and parents and 600 students were interviewed in Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore, reveals that the majority of students (72 percent) don't drink water because their teachers won't allow for adequate toilet breaks. The dismal conclusions of the study prompted APER to launch a nationwide 'Water Bell' campaign last November urging preschool and school managements to ring the school bell four times per day to remind students to drink up.

HYDRATION WARNING SIGNS

Inadequate consumption of water by children results in dehydration. Common symptoms of child dehydration include:

- Headaches
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Cracked lips
- Dry mouth
- Fatigue

Prolonged neglect of hydration can lead to chronic health problems including urinary tract infections and other ailments. According to medical opinion, by the time a child experiences thirst, she has already lost 2 percent of body mass to dehydration.

TIPS TO INCREASE WATER INTAKE

For children under eight, at least 4-6 glasses of water in a day is recommended. For children older than eight, a minimum of 6-8 glasses is advised.

Some tips to increase your child's water intake:

Lead by example and mandate a daily routine for all family members to sip water all day. At the dinner table discuss the critical importance of

MAKING WATER TASTE BETTER



According to US-based Persistence Market Research, in the next decade, the fruit-infused water market is expected to double from its current value of \$10 billion. As families worldwide move toward including health drinks in everyday menus, fruit-infused water with its high nutritional quotient is becoming increasingly popular.

For children, flavoured water is a great alternative to sugary and packaged drinks. The World Health Organisation's guidelines recommend that children aged two-18 years should consume less than 25 grams or 6 teaspoons of sugar per day. However, children worldwide average 12-34 teaspoons of sugar daily.

Detox fruity water contains sliced vegetables, fruit, herbs, and spices. Simply add a slice of lemon, orange, mint, cucumber, etc to the family water jug, cover, and soak it overnight in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.

Try these favourites: citrus mix — water infused with the fruity flavours of orange and lemon slices, an excellent source of Vitamin C; or watermelon mint — chunks of watermelon, 2-3 mint leaves, 1 slice of lime and water.

hydration for physical health and well-being

- ▶ To encourage children to like drinking water, infuse the family jug with fruits and herbs for variety and flavour.
- ▶ An attractive water bottle is likely to draw children to it. For instance drawing a favourite cartoon character on the bottle will encourage them to use the water bottle.
- ▶ Always offer water with meals and snacks

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