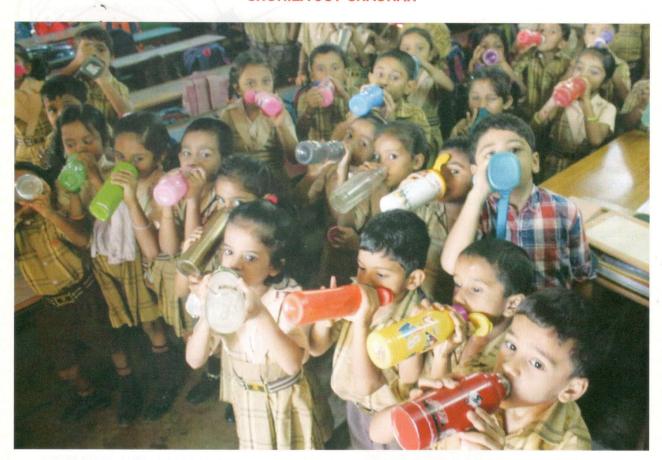
## HEALTH & NUTRITION

# 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

#### SHUNILA JOY CHAUHAN



he familiar advice: drink eight to ten glasses of water a day is dinned 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. ent survey conducted by the Mumbai-based iation of Primary Education and Research (APER) that 68 percent of school children bring nearly ater bottles home, indicating that they don't drink gh water in school. The study, for which 900 ers and parents and 600 students were interviewed umbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore, eveals that the majority of students (72 percent) drink water because their teachers won't allow adequate toilet breaks.

ne dismal conclusions of the study prompted APER inch a nationwide 'Water Bell' campaign last mber urging preschool and school managements to the school bell four times per day to remind students ink up.

#### DRATION WARNING SIGNS

equate consumption of water by children results in dration. Common symptoms of child dehydration

leadaches

oor concentration

racked lips

ry mouth

olonged neglect of hydration can lead to chronic h problems including urinary tract infections and y ailments. According to medical opinion, by the a child experiences thirst, she has already lost 2 nt of body mass to dehydration.

#### YS TO INCREASE WATER INTAKE

hildren under eight, at least 4-6 glasses of water in ours is recommended. For children older than eight imum of 6-8 glasses is advised.

me tips to increase your child's water intake: Lead by example and mandate a daily routine for all w members to sip water all day.

At the dinner table discuss the critical importance of

### MAKING WATER TASTE BETTER



ccording 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
- Always offer water with meals and snacks

(Shunila Joy Chauhan is principal of the Thakur International School - Cambridge, Mumbai)