

# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



**JULY 2025**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

# KEEP KIDS HYDRATED



**W**ith water bottles and giant cups being all the rage, it may come as a surprise that dehydration remains a risk for many children and teens. However, it is true! Dehydration, which occurs when a person's body does not receive enough water to function properly, is a common cause of illness in children, particularly during the summer. Mild dehydration can cause a person to feel tired, nauseous, and lightheaded. If it is not addressed, severe dehydration can lead to major organ damage and can even be fatal.

The most common cause of dehydration in children is not drinking enough water. Children 8 years and older should drink at least 8 cups of water per day. Being active, spending time outside in the heat, and illness all increase the need for

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more water. The more a person sweats, the more water they need to replace what was lost.

If your child is sick, they may not want to drink much, but that does not mean their body does not need water. Water is an essential part of the body's immune system, which fights disease. Fever increases the body's need for water by causing sweat. Vomiting and diarrhea also drain the body of needed water. If your sick child cannot stomach plain water, try coconut water or add an electrolyte mix.

Here are some other tips to help encourage your kids to drink enough water:

- **Make the container appealing:** Let kids choose their own water bottles or cup with fun designs or characters or decorate one you already have with stickers or permanent markers.
- **Add some flavor:** Add slices of fruit and vegetables, like citrus, berries, or cucumber, or mint to water for a fun flavor. Experiment with single flavors or mix flavors to create a unique combination.
- **Keep it cool:** Add ice to water to make it more refreshing or use shaped ice cube trays to add interest.
- **Silly straws:** Some people can drink more water from a straw than out of a cup or glass. Offer kids a straw to drink out of if they struggle to drink from a cup. There are so many types to choose from — bendable, colorful, and even swirly!
- **Water station:** Set up a designated place where kids can easily refill their bottles or cups. Sometimes, just the visual cue of a place to put their water bottle, or a pitcher of water on the counter, is enough to remind them to drink.
- **Replace sugary drinks:** Avoid sugary drinks, such as juice, soda, and sports drinks, and opt for water instead. If this is a problem, start small with transitioning one “point of contact” at a time. For example, only carry water to drink while out and about, or only offer water with snacks or meals. Gradually make the shift to drinking all or mostly water.
- **Eat hydrating foods:** Encourage kids to eat fruits and vegetables high in water content, like watermelon, cucumbers, and celery.
- **Remind them:** Remind kids to drink water before, during, and after physical activity, or when spending time outside in warm or hot weather.
- **Drink water yourself:** Be a good role model by drinking water yourself throughout the day.

### REFERENCE:

<https://headstart.gov/publication/encouraging-your-child-drink-water>

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