



Water Facts:

Our bodies are 50-75% water. Water may seem ordinary, but it is one of the top substances that humans need for life! It has a role in regulating body temperature, carrying nutrients and oxygen to the cells, cushioning joints, protecting organs & tissues, and keeping hair and skin healthy.



Dehydration Danger:

Kids sweat at a lower rate than adults. (Sweating is the primary way for lowering body temperature.) Because of their smaller size, kids tolerate temperature extremes less effectively than adults and thus get hotter during exercise. A fluid loss of 2% (2 lbs. for a 100 pound athlete) can lead to headaches, decreased muscle strength & endurance, increased overall fatigue, joint & muscle soreness, and decreased mental alertness.



Water Loss:

We lose water through sweat, the air we breathe out, and in the bathroom. The rate increases in a hot climate, for kids who perspire more than usual, and during longer periods of intense activity such as a tournament. Using thirst as a cue is dangerous because by the time we feel thirsty we are already starting to dehydrate.



How to Check:

A simple way to check hydration levels is to check urine color and volume. Clear urine with the usual number of trips to the restroom indicates proper hydration levels. Dark urine and less frequent trips is a sign of dehydration. Urine should be nearly colorless. Another way is to weigh your child before and immediately after a physical activity where they perspired. You will have to make allowances for any trips to the restroom or the weight of any drinks ingested.

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Hydration Continued...



How Much to Drink:

Kids should aim for 8 eight ounce glasses per day, the same as adults. If a child is participating in physical activity, encourage 3-4 oz every 15 min. during the activity (4-8 oz for teens). After the activity, encourage 20 oz for every pound of weight lost.



What to Drink:

Water is the best choice for any activity less than 60 minutes and in moderate weather. For longer activities and in hotter weather, sports drinks with carbohydrates and the new protein/carbohydrate drinks provide fluid plus electrolytes, carbs to replenish the muscle glycogen stores (fuel) and protein to decrease muscle breakdown.



What Not to Drink:

Caffeine contributes to dehydration by acting as a diuretic and can cause anxiety, the “jitters” and sleep problems. Soda pop contains phosphates which leach calcium from the bones and creates a feeling of being “full” preventing water and other nutritious food from sounding appealing. Sugary drinks can cause stomach cramps.



Modeling:

Be a great example for your kids! Carry a water bottle with you and prepare one for your kids. Keep cold water available at home in a dispenser that is kid friendly. Pack adequate fluids for physical activity outings and sporting events.



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