

Healthy Drinking

50-75% of your body is water, so it's important to drink plenty and keep yourself hydrated! Not drinking enough water/fluids can lead to dehydration.

Children are at a greater risk of dehydration than adults. This is because in relation to their size, children have a larger proportion of their skin available to lose sweat and be exposed to heat. Also, children don't always recognise that they're thirsty, and if they're not encouraged and reminded may forget to drink. Luckily, there are a few ways to tell if your child is hydrated.

How do I know if my child is hydrated?

Frequent bathroom breaks or wet nappies are the easiest way to tell if your child is hydrated. You can also look out for these common symptoms of dehydration:

- Headaches
- Poor concentration
- Thirst
- Cracked lips
- Dry mouth
- Constipation
- Lethargy
- Dark urine

If your child is struggling to drink enough water, try using different bottles or cups, altering the temperature or adding fruit/squash. Frozen fruit can be a fun way to change the temperature and taste of water, and make it look more appealing!

You should aim to drink 4-6 drinks if you're aged under 8 years old, or 6-8 drinks a day if you're 8 and older. Remember, you may need to drink more if you're more active or it's a hot day!

For younger children from 12 months:

- Water and milk count as healthy fluids.
- Around 6-8 cups (100-150ml per cup) daily is recommended
- Offer at all meal and drink times and freely available in between
- Children will obtain fluid from foods such as soups and yoghurts
- Teas, coffee and energy drinks are not recommended

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- Fruit juice and smoothies also count towards a child's fluid consumption but they contain free sugars, so limit these drinks to a combined total of 150ml per day and at mealtimes only

Alcohol

Older children may show interest in alcohol and it is important they are aware of the negative effects it can have on their developing bodies. Alcohol poisoning can occur when an excessive amount of alcohol is consumed in one go. Alcohol affects body control which increases the likelihood of injury. Alcohol has been linked to alcoholic liver disease, cancers, heart issues and even diabetes!

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