

HYDRATION

I'm frequently seeing children who come to school dehydrated, having had maybe 4 fluid ounces of juice or milk and no water before school. Children only have 8 fluid ounces of milk with school lunches; school juices are only 4 ounces. They are not drinking much, maybe an ounce, at the water fountain. Please have your child drink at least 8 ounces of water before school each day and immediately after school. Your child is welcome to carry a canteen of PLAIN WATER at school. Make sure to have several canteens so that canteens can dry thoroughly between uses.

Children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults because their body surface area makes up a much greater proportion of their overall weight than that of adults. They also may not know warning signs of dehydration (dry mouth, thirst, fatigue, muscle weakness, headache, dizziness). Please teach them that by the time they feel thirsty, they are already dehydrated. Also teach them to assess hydration by looking at the color of urine (this only works with a white toilet). Urine should be clear or very pale yellow, except for the first urination in the morning, when it is more concentrated and a deeper yellow. Keep in mind that some vitamins, foods, and medications can intensify color or change color of urine.

Parents know to keep their children hydrated in hot weather, but sometimes forget how dehydrating indoor heating can be in winter. Heated indoor air will cause skin and lungs to lose more moisture.

Sodas have too much sugar and sodium to be of value in hydrating. Sports drinks contain sweeteners and many calories; see information about why your child does NOT need them at

[http://cwh.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/primary_pdfs/CWH Sports Drinks FAQ Sheet English Spanish 7.07 0.pdf](http://cwh.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/primary_pdfs/CWH_Sports_Drinks_FAQ_Sheet_English_Spanish_7.07_0.pdf)

On the Mayo Clinic website, search for "dehydration" and you'll find a number of informative articles.

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