

Public Health Spotlight

Staying Hydrated

August 2019

In this month's Public Health Briefing we focus on the importance of staying hydrated.

Water makes up two thirds of our body so it is vital we drink enough to stay hydrated and maintain a healthy balance. Whilst staying hydrated is important all year round it is particularly vital in warmer temperatures.

This briefing provides some simple but effective messages on staying hydrated that I would like you to help promote within your local communities.

How much should we drink to stay hydrated?

Water is essential for life and it is very important to get the right amount of fluid to be healthy. However, there are lots of mixed messages about how much and what to drink, which can be confusing.

The British Nutrition Foundation advises:

- infants aged 1-4 years should drink 6-8 cups or beakers a day
- children aged 5-11 years should drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day
- healthy young people and adults should drink 6-8 glasses each day

What should we drink to stay hydrated?

Water - good choice because it hydrates without providing extra calories or harming teeth

Tea, coffee & hot drinks - provides some nutrients if milk or milk alternatives are added.

Avoid drinking caffeine options too often

Milk – good source of nutrients, adults and

older children should opt for lower- fat varieties
Sugar free drinks - provide fluid without extra calories, although drinks like squashes and fizzy drinks are acidic, which can harm teeth

Fruit and vegetable juice and smoothies – high in sugars and acidity, so drink with meals to protect teeth

Energy drinks - high in sugars, caffeine and other stimulants. Should not be consumed regularly and not recommended for under 18s

Top tips for staying hydrated:

- keep staying hydrated fun by drinking water, diluted juice, squash or fruit teas
- switch dry snacks to fruit and veg with high water content, such as tomatoes or melon
- encourage older people/people you care for to drink fluids throughout the day
- drink water before and after activity
- keep a water bottle with you when you are out and about

Tips for supporting older people to stay hydrated:

- offer drinks regularly throughout the day
- offer flavoursome drinks, such as flavoured teas, diluted juice or squash
- ice lollies, yoghurts and smoothies can be a great source of fluid
- ensure they have a drink close by so it is easy to sip throughout the day



Who gets dehydrated?

Many people get dehydrated by not drinking enough fluid or by losing fluids and not replacing them

Although anyone can become dehydrated, some groups are particularly at risk, these include:

- babies and infants
- older people
- people with a long-term health conditions, such as diabetes
- individuals who are very active

Signs of dehydration:

- dry mouth, lips or eyes
- thirst
- dizziness
- headaches
- tiredness
- lack of concentration
- pain when urination
- dark and strong smelling urine

Why is staying hydrated so important?

Water has many functions in the body including regulating temperature, transporting nutrients in blood, removing waste products in urine and acting as a shock absorber in joints.

Benefits of staying hydrated:

- maximises energy levels, physical performance and brain function
- helps prevent and treat headaches
- keeps joints and muscles moving
- helps maintain a healthy weight
- reduces risk of falls
- helps prevent and relieve constipation
- keeps skin supple
- prevents life threatening blood infections

More top tips for staying safe in the sun:

Below are more great tips for residents and visitors to help them stay safe in the sun while having fun.

- the sun is strongest between 11am and 3pm so try to stay in the shade at these times
- you can burn in the UK even if its cloudy so always wear sunscreen
- wear a hat to shade areas such as ears that can burn easily
- protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses
- always wear sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15
- apply sun screen at least 30 minutes before you go out in the sun and regularly re-apply throughout the day

Further information on staying hydrated can be found at:

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/hydration.html>

I would really value your feedback and recommendations for future updates. Please send through your views to publichealth@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support



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