

# Healthy Hydration



## Objective

- *Improve students' access to safe, free drinking water throughout the school day to support good health and learning.*



## Key Messages

### Most school-aged children don't consume enough fluid.

- Research indicates that over half of youth ages 6 - 19 years old are not adequately hydrated.<sup>3</sup>
- Staying hydrated is especially important for children, as they have high fluid losses and higher activity levels than adults.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, children may not recognize the need to replace lost fluids, placing them at higher risk for dehydration.<sup>4</sup>
- Water and milk and other calcium-rich beverages are the preferred form of hydration. Besides having zero calories, water is a no-sugar thirst-quencher.

And 1 cup of milk (which offers 1 cup of fluid) provides with almost one-third of their daily calcium requirement; calcium is an essential building-block for strong bones, but most kids don't get enough!

### Hydration has a major impact on academic success.

- Adequate hydration improves cognitive functioning and ability to learn in school-aged children. Children who drink water are better able to concentrate, are more alert, and have improved short-term memory compared to their dehydrated peers.<sup>3-5</sup>
- Dehydration can cause disruptions in mood and negatively impact executive brain functioning such as planning and spatial awareness.<sup>4,6</sup> Even when a child is mildly dehydrated, a drink of water can improve cognitive performance.<sup>7</sup>
- Foods such as fruits and vegetables also provide a healthy source of fluid.

### Water consumption protects against chronic disease and other health issues.

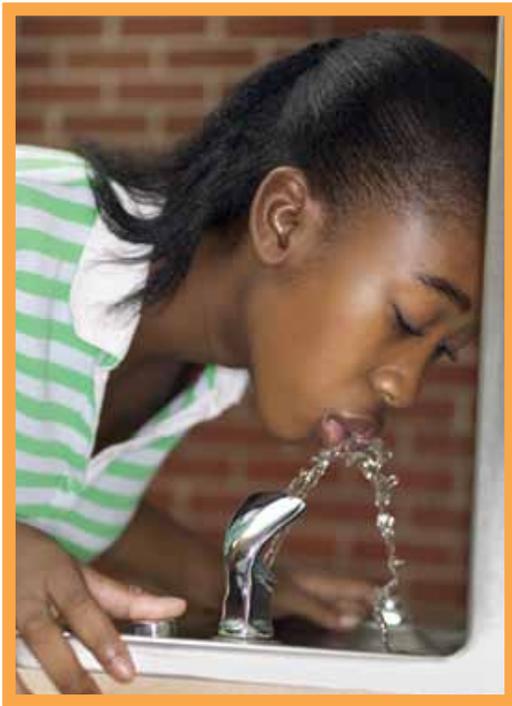
- When water is promoted in schools, children consume fewer sugar-sweetened beverages.<sup>1</sup> This reduction in sugar sweetened beverage consumption reduces the prevalence of childhood dental decay.<sup>1</sup>
- A compelling study found that when children are educated on the value of water and provided with drinking fountains and water bottles in schools, they increased their water intake by 1.1 glasses per day. This increase in water consumption was shown to reduce a child's risk of overweight by 31%.<sup>8</sup>
- Furthermore, promoting water in schools encourages lifelong healthy hydration habits.<sup>1</sup>



## Key Messages (cont'd)

### Children's beverage choices often do not contribute to a healthy, balanced diet.

- Nearly two-thirds of students in Dakota County report drinking one or more servings of sugar-sweetened beverages (such as soda, juice, sport and energy drinks, lemonade, and sweetened teas and coffees) on any given day.<sup>9</sup>
  - Dakota County data demonstrates that as students get older, they tend to drink less water. The percent of students drinking 7 or more servings of water per day decreased with increasing age (39 percent of 5th graders compared to 27 percent of 11th graders) in 2013.<sup>2</sup>



- A 1 cup serving of grape-flavored beverage contains around 31 grams (almost 8 teaspoons) of sugar - more than a regular-sized Snickers candy bar! If juice is provided, make sure it is 100% juice and in small portions (4-6 ounces per day), as even this type of juice is a highly concentrated source of sugar.
- Dehydration can be mistaken for hunger and craving high-fat foods<sup>1</sup>, which may negatively impact a child's diet quality.



## Key Strategies

- **Ensure that free water is available to students during meal times where they are served and throughout the school day.**<sup>10</sup>
  - Ensure the district is meeting the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act requirement that free water be made available to students during meal times. Address barriers to implementing this mandate.
  - Provide water in key school locations, including food service area, classroom, gym, outdoor exercise area, and common areas.
  - Provide easy access to water by having at least one drinking fountain available for every 25 students.
  - Make sure that the fountains are clean and well-maintained.
  - Provide water through other sources, such as pitchers, water dispensers, or hydration stations.
  - Make sure that the tap water is not only safe to drink, but also tastes good and is cold.
- **Educate students and families about the benefits of tap water.**<sup>11</sup> Encourage teachers to develop classroom lessons dealing with the water needs of the body and the water cycle in nature.
- **Provide free water bottles at the start of the school year. Studies show that students significantly increase their total fluid intake** when schools provide free access to water bottles throughout the day and students are allowed to place water bottles on their desk.<sup>1</sup>
- **Make drinking water fun.** Provide opportunities for students to try flavored water. Consider taste testing flavored water in the cafeteria and asking students to vote on their favorite item. For example, try infusing water with mint leaves and cubed watermelon for a refreshing minty watermelon treat!



## Success Stories

### **Chaska Senior High School, Minnesota** **Hydration station makes a splash in Chaska**

The driven and creative Kitchen Site Manager at Chaska Senior High School, Spencer Fischer, is a man with a mission. In 2011, Fischer introduced flavored-water Hydration Stations at Chaska High School, and they have been a huge success! The station includes clear containers filled with water, ice, and fruits or veggies for flavoring. Fischer explains that they “always have a lemon-lime option and a cucumber option, and our third container is our wild card. Choices have included orange-mint, strawberry-pineapple, cantaloupe, and watermelon.” The water containers are placed in a walk-in cooler overnight and the flavoring ingredients are added to the water each morning. Throughout the day and during after-school programs, food service staff refills the stations with fresh, cool water. Keys to successful implementation include gaining staff commitment, engaging students in choosing water flavors, and planning to ensure that enough water is chilled and flavored each day. Fischer estimates he provides 20 – 30 gallons of water daily for approximately 1,200 students and staff.

Read the full story here (see page 4):

<http://www.mnsna.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/MSNA-Thymes-January-2011.pdf>

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### **La Quinta, California**

#### **Hydration stations replace old drinking fountains**

High school students collaborated with the local public health department in La Quinta to replace old, unappealing water fountains with hydration stations that provide students with clean, fresh, cool water throughout the day. The project was designed to encourage students to drink more water instead of sugary sports drinks or sodas, and to also reduce disposable waste. As one stakeholder comments, “If you present [water] in a nice way, they’re going to drink it!” Check out the story here:

<http://www.kesq.com/news/valley-schools-get-hydrating-stations/26297270>



## Sample Policy Language

“Safe, unflavored, drinking water is available throughout the school day at no cost to students.”<sup>13</sup>

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“Water bottles are permitted to be taken into all classrooms.”

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“The school provides one water source for every 25 students.”<sup>10</sup>

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“Students will be provided with cool, clear, drinking water that has been tested for lead and other contaminants.”<sup>10</sup>

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“At least one water source will be available in all locations where students learn, eat and are active. This includes, but is not limited to: the food service area, outdoor physical activity area, indoor physical activity area, classrooms, and common areas.”<sup>10</sup>



## Resources for Implementation

- **Water Access in Schools: This easy-to-use toolkit includes background information, needs assessment tools, implementation strategies, and evaluation guidance to provide students with access to drinking water.** [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/Water\\_Access\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/Water_Access_in_Schools.pdf)
- **“Drink Water!” Said the Otter”: Potter the Otter: A Tale about Water was developed to teach with young children about making healthier drink choices.** [http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/parents/pdf/PottertheOtter-ebook-eng\\_spn.pdf](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/parents/pdf/PottertheOtter-ebook-eng_spn.pdf)
- **Rethink Your Drink Campaign Curriculum: This campaign has approved lessons for use with audiences for a variety of age levels. It includes games, handouts, surveys, scavenger hunts, and much more!** <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/pages/rethinkyourdrinkcurriculum.aspx>
- **Every Sip Counts: Minneapolis Health Department campaign that provides evidence, strategies, and resources in English, Spanish, and Hmong encouraging Minnesotans’ to choose tap water.** <https://rethinkyourdrink.minneapolismn.gov/>
- **Drinking Water Access in Schools: A fact sheet offering strategies for schools to make drinking water more readily available, and guidance for parents, teachers and community members to get involved.** [http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/WaterAccess\\_FactSht\\_20141106.pdf](http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/WaterAccess_FactSht_20141106.pdf)
- **Safe Drinking Water in Schools: The Environmental Protection Agency’s information about drinking water quality. The primary focus of the page is on testing for lead in drinking water in schools.** <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/drinkingwater/schools/index.cfm>
- **Water in Schools: Information on current requirements and suggestions.** <http://waterinschools.org/>
- **Healthy Beverage Posters: (Nutrition Fact Labels)** [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/RD-DrinkLabelCards\\_Final\\_Print\\_7\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/RD-DrinkLabelCards_Final_Print_7_2013.pdf) and **(Rethink Your Drink) in English and Spanish: (ENG/SPAN)**
- **“Share the Love, Share the Water” healthy beverage promotional video in English and Spanish:** English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJDoKIN7Lw> and Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpOQ2sHD5u8>

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*Smart Choices is a partnership of the Dakota County Public Health Department and school districts in Dakota County committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice by creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity before, during and after school.*

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