



## Water – A Life Sustaining Beverage

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message was developed by the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Children’s Memorial Hospital. The message is focused on 5 healthy lifestyle behaviors to help children and their families be more healthy.

5-4-3-2-1 Go! promotes:

- *5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day*
- *4 servings of water a day*
- *3 servings of low-fat dairy a day*
- *2 hours or less of screen time (TV, video games) a day*
- *1 hour or more of physical activity a day*

This message was developed with the 3-5 year old child in mind, but is a healthy message for the entire family.

### WHY IS WATER IMPORTANT?

Water is a very important part of life.

The human body is about 60-70% water.

It is used in all of the body’s systems - without water, the body doesn’t work as well, and eventually will die. Every day we use water:

- Cells
- Blood
- Digestion
- Waste elimination
- Joint lubrication
- Cooling

Every day we lose water through :

- sweat (even if we don’t feel it)
- breathing
- speaking
- other body processes (like urination)

**---This means we have to replace it!**



## Dehydration = Not Enough Water

Dehydration can affect behavior and the ability to function and learn.

Common signs:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness
- Irregularity
- Collapse (if extreme)

## How Much Water Do We Need?

The amount needed, for children and adults, depends both on body weight and the level of physical activity in the person's life. In addition, if the weather is dry, we need to drink more water. In general, the more you weigh and the more active you are, the more water you need.

**-However, the minimum amount of water you should have each day is 4 cups, or 32 ounces.**

**--This is in addition to other fluids that you may drink, such as juice or tea.**

While we usually feel thirsty when we need water, keep in mind that when children are playing they may not realize they are thirsty and can become dehydrated.

## Sugary Drinks and Weight

Examples include:

- Soda pop
- Juice drinks
- Lemonade
- Sweetened iced tea
- Kool-aid
- Sports drinks

Under most circumstances, very young children have a natural ability to tell how many calories they need. They eat enough to get that amount.

**However, if they are given sugary drinks, then they may not eat or drink food that has important nutrients, like fruit or milk. This means their diet is less healthy overall.** This is true for older children and adults also.

People may eat the same amount of solid foods with or without sugary drinks.

This means that the sugary drinks are calories in addition to what you would have eaten without them.

## Increase Water Availability

You and your family may already be accustomed to sugary drinks.

If water is easier to get than other drinks, then everyone will be more likely to choose it.

- Keep a water pitcher available at meals
- Remember to take water bottles when you go out
- Sparkling water is good for variety
- Add a piece of fruit to your water for flavor
- Don't keep sugary drinks in the house!
  - *If it is not there, you won't drink it, and neither will they!*



### **Start Young**

First of all, be a healthy role model for your family:

- Make water your drink of choice
- Drink sugary beverages rarely
  - Don't give your children sugary drinks and limit juice

### **Tap Water or Bottled?**

You may have heard people state that bottled water is healthier or safer. **However, there is no evidence if that is true. In fact, many bottled waters are just tap water. In the US the tap water is some of the safest water to drink in the entire world.**

In addition, the tap water here in Chicago contains fluoride, which is important for your and your child's dental health since it helps to prevent cavities.

Points to keep in mind are that:

- Bottled water is less regulated, so it may have more contaminants than tap water.
- Bottled water can have plastics in them.
- However, tap water from older homes may contain lead, so it is important to run the water for a couple of minutes to flush the pipes before drinking it.

### **IT'S UP TO YOU!**

#### **Take-Home Water Points:**

- Water is a very important part of our lives. The best way to get it is to drink plain water!
- When you or your family drink sugary drinks you are drinking empty calories and may miss out on important vitamins and minerals.
- Caffeinated drinks can affect behavior and the ability to learn. Kids should avoid it in coffee and other drinks too.
- Keep water everywhere, in the refrigerator, at the dinner table, in the car, while shopping.
- Use some no calorie flavoring or a small amount of 100% juice to give some variety. Do this occasionally, or as a treat

Adapted from the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Children's Memorial Hospital, 5-4-3-2-1 Go!: <http://www.clocc.net/partners/54321Go/4%20Servings%20a%20day%20Script.pdf>

Accessed: March 5, 2012 KLM