



Why Water Matters for children



Children and water

Being properly hydrated is important for all of us. It is fundamental to good health and well-being. For children, hydration is especially important.

Health professionals recommend two drinks for children: water and milk.

For school-age children, water is a great way to hydrate: it is tooth-friendly and calorie-free so helps prevent obesity.

Juices and other drinks containing natural or added sugar are okay as an occasional treat with a meal but should never be the main source of hydration.

Encouraging children to drink plain water teaches them healthy habits – for life.

Dehydration

Research has shown that 6 out of 10 of children are thought to arrive at school in a dehydrated state. Even a 1% drop in hydration can impair physical and academic performance so it's a poor way to start the day.

Why think drink?

Knowing when you are thirsty doesn't come naturally; children have to learn this behaviour. Children's higher total body water content and higher respiratory and metabolic rate makes them more vulnerable to risk of dehydration, compared with adults. Children need to be 'taught' to drink frequently and healthily.

Children should have 6-8 drinks a day and it has been proved that it encourages healthy hydration if they keep water on their desks.

Water is top of the class

Schools need to get the water message across that water is a 'cool' drink in every sense. Research has shown that exam performance improves amongst students who drink water and are well-hydrated. The message is 'think drink to help you think'.

Cool schools

Water from a water dispenser is convenient, tastes good and provides a visible reminder to drink healthily. Whether you opt for bottled or mains-fed dispensers, or bottle-filling stations that are specifically designed to refill personal reusable bottles and offers high volume dispensing, depends on a variety of factors. And, of course, healthy hydration should not stop at 4 o'clock in term time. Having accessible, fresh water in your home keeps that healthy hydration habit going throughout the day and into the weekend and school holidays. There are a range of water dispensers designed for your home.

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Which waters are suitable for children?

Whether you choose a bottled water or mains-fed dispenser, or a bottle-filling station, depends on a number of practical considerations. If there is no handy access to the mains water system or if you just prefer natural or spring water, bottled water dispensers are the perfect choice. If, on the other hand, you have a suitable location to access mains-fed water, then a mains-fed dispenser, or a bottle-filling station may be for you.

Not all water dispensers are equal

Whichever style of water dispenser you choose, make sure of one thing. Choose a supplier that is a member of the Water Dispenser & Hydration Association. Known as the WHA, the Association is the leading trade body ensuring standards of safety and hygiene that are at the top of their class. WHA members must stick to strict Codes of Practice and good conduct and are rigorously audited every year. By dealing with a WHA member you know you are getting the best. Visit <https://twha.co.uk/find-a-member> to check who to do business with.

The sustainable choice

Bottled water dispensers are highly sustainable; 19, 11 or 10 litre bottles are initially delivered then collected when empty, cleansed and reused many times over whilst mains-fed dispensers, of course, use water from the mains. Many WHA members follow the '5 for 5 Sustainability Pledge' and are committed to reducing single use plastic.

For more information

The WHA also publishes detailed guidelines for schools on:

- Sanitisation of Water Dispensers
- Location, Use and Servicing of Water Dispensers.

These and further information can be obtained by visiting www.twha.co.uk

Healthy Hydration Chart

There's one easy way to know if you are properly hydrated – check the colour of your urine against our 'pee chart'. Pale is good; dark urine means you could be in need of fluid. And if you find you are dehydrated, here's an easy way to rehydrate healthily: head straight to that water dispenser... simple.

well hydrated

Your urine is an ideal, pale straw colour. Keep up the good work.

You're okay but you could do with a small glass of water now.

You may be a little dehydrated. Drink a couple of glasses of water now.

You need to drink about up to half litre of water right now.

Not good! You are dehydrated and may have a headache. Drink a litre of water.

poorly hydrated

Note: if your urine is even darker than this and or red/dark brown then dehydration may not be the problem. Seek medical advice.



Water Dispenser &
Hydration Association

QUALITY • TRUST • STANDARDS

Choose a WHA member –
for hydration you can trust
www.twha.co.uk

Disclaimer: the information given here is for guidance only. If in doubt about your health seek attention from a medical professional.