

KEY TIPS ON HYDRATION

FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN

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The hydration needs of children are not that different to those of adults. However, **infants and children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults**. According to the Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)¹ 2010, the values for total water intake shown in the adjacent table are those recommended for infants and children under conditions of moderate environmental temperature and moderate physical activity levels.

Age range	Daily adequate water intake ¹
Infants	
0-6 months	680 mL/day or 100-190 mL/kg/day . From human milk/infant formula.
6-12 months	0.8-1.0 L/day . From human milk/infant formula and complementary foods and beverages.
1-2 years	1.1-1.2 L/day
Children	
2-3 years	1.3 L/day
4-8 years	1.6 L/day

The Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)* issued reference intakes for water in 2010. These are defined as total water intake, which is water from beverages (including drinking water) and from food moisture. It is normally assumed that the contribution of food to total dietary water intake is 20 to 30%, while 70 to 80% is provided by beverages. This relationship is not fixed and depends on the type of beverage and on the choice of foods.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT:

- Compared to children and adults, infants have a higher total body water content. In newborns the total body water content can be as much as 75% and this decreases to 50-60% by the time they reach adulthood.
- Infants and children need water not only to replace the losses via respiration, sweating and urine, but also for growth.
- Instances of diarrhoea and vomiting are frequent in infants and young children and both can lead to dehydration if water losses are not replaced.
- Infants cannot easily communicate their needs and active children can be so involved in what they are doing that they forget to drink, so it is important for those caring for them to be alert to the possibility of dehydration especially during hot weather or during periods of illness.

HOW TO ENSURE PROPER HYDRATION OF INFANTS AND CHILDREN

INFANTS

During breastfeeding healthy infants can maintain adequate hydration status while exclusively breastfed without additional water, even in very hot weather.

Additional water intake may be needed from 0 to 6 months when an infant formula is used, or from 6 to 12 months when formula or other weaning food with higher energy and nutrient density is used.

CHILDREN

These are practical tips to keep active children hydrated, especially in hot environments:

- Have children drink before heading out to play and call them in frequently for drinks.
- To avoid overheating, encourage regular breaks in the shade when the sun is hot.
- Keep drinks cool whenever possible and offer beverages that your child enjoys. All beverages, including water, milk, juice, soft-drinks, and other fluids, can help meet a child's hydration needs..
- Remember that many foods have a high water content and contribute to total fluid intake. Fruits, vegetables, and some other foods are high in water content.

There is some evidence that providing drinks to children can help them to perform better in standardised tests of concentration, short term memory and other essential elements of the learning process. Hydration needs should therefore also be considered when children are at school.



It is calculated that of the total water consumed...

20-30%
typically comes from food and
70-80%
from beverages (all types, not just plain water)^{1,2}

However, this may vary greatly depending of the diet that an individual chooses.^{1,2}

To know more about the sources of water, please visit us at:

http://www.europeanhydrationinstitute.org/nutrition_and_beverages.html

1. EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition, and Allergies (NDA); Scientific Opinion on Dietary reference values for water. EFSA Journal 2010; 8(3):1459. Available online: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1459.htm>

2. Manz F, Johner SA, Wentz A, Boeing H, Remer T. Water balance throughout the adult lifespan in a German population. Br J Nutr 2011; 1-9 [Epub ahead of print]