

## **WATER**



*Figure 1 Fill your child's drink bottle with tap water!*

Tap water is the most important drink for your child. Your School Nurse, Oral Health services and Move well Eat Well all recommend you and your child drink water as your main fluid.

Our bodies are made up of 50% to 60% water, and water that is lost through breathing, sweat, and urine needs to be replaced. This is especially important in hot weather.

### **Fluoride**

Fluoride is used in tap water in Tasmania to prevent tooth decay. It does not change the taste or smell of water. It is thought that the trend of drinking bottled water may contribute to the increase in tooth decay in recent years.



*Figure 2 drink tap water!*

### **Other drinks**

Milk is also an important drink for growing children.

Soft drinks, even diet soft drinks – should be thought of as an occasional, or 'sometimes' drink, and kept for special occasions. Diet drinks still reinforce the habit of choosing fizzy or sweet drinks, and can teach children that they are an everyday choice rather than a 'sometimes' drink.

Diet drinks are bad for our teeth too, because acid erodes the enamel protecting them.

Fruit juice is very high in sugar and acid, which is bad for teeth. It is much better for you to simply eat a piece of fruit. Limit fruit juice to one small glass each day with a meal. Tea, coffee, sport or 'energy' drinks and alcohol should not be given to children.

### **Be a role model**

Have you noticed how much your children like to copy you? Children copy their parents doing all sorts of things – from talking on the phone to .... They tend to copy our bad habits as well as our good ones! So if you swap your coke for water, your children are much more likely to want to as well.

Soft drinks can also fill children up so they are less interested in the healthy dinner you have gone to all that trouble to make!

### **You can take a horse to water....**

Parents can feel worried that their children simply won't drink water. Thirst is a good guide to when and how much we need to drink. Trying to get a child to drink when they are not thirsty, is like trying to make a horse drink! However if you **only** offer water, and don't offer fizzy or sweet drinks, your child will drink when they are thirsty!



*Figure 3 Get everyone in the family drinking water as their main drink. Children love to copy you!*

### **Tips:**

- In summer, keep water in the fridge. You could add some sliced lemon or orange for a bit of flavour.
- You could also add chopped up, frozen fruit in ice blocks in summer.
- If your tap water tastes unusual, you could try using a water filter.
- Take filled water bottles when you go out – saves dollars and is better for you!

### *References*

Child Youth Health accessed at

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=302&id=1621>

Raising Children network accessed at

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/healthy\\_drinks\\_for\\_kids.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/healthy_drinks_for_kids.html)

Move Well Eat Well, DHHS accessed at

<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/mwew>