



## Water – the Wonder Drink!

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is all about helping Ontario kids make healthy choices. Our community is one of 45 across the province chosen to be a part of this special project. That means new ideas and programs are coming to our community – things that make it easier for kids to be active and eat healthier. These are the keys to good health as our children grow up and become adults.

### Water is best

Encourage your kids to drink water when they are thirsty. It is much better for them than drinks with sugar added.

We all know healthy eating is important for growing children. So is healthy hydration. Our community is looking for ways to make it easier for kids to choose healthy drinks more often.

Water is the natural choice for kids to stay hydrated and healthy. Water makes up more than half of a child's weight. They need a steady supply to keep their bodies working and growing properly. Water contains no sugar, calories, additives, preservatives, or caffeine. And it's free.

Make water the easy choice for your kids – and keep them sipping throughout the day.

### How to make water the first choice

Make water the 'new normal' in your home:

- Keep pitchers of water on the kitchen counter or in the fridge for everyone to grab a drink from throughout the day.
- Put water on the table at mealtimes.
- Fill up re-usable bottles of water for the kids to take to school and sports activities.

### Milk: another healthy choice

Plain, unsweetened milk is another healthy choice for your thirsty kids. Milk also gives them some of the calcium and vitamin D they need each day. For those who cannot drink milk, unsweetened, fortified soy drinks are an option.

Babies thrive on breast milk. Health Canada encourages mothers to exclusively breastfeed infants until 6 months. Most babies breastfed in this way do not need additional water before they are 6 months old. Avoid giving babies juice, cow's milk, or other liquids until they are a year old. Continued breastfeeding has many health benefits for children up to the age of 2 and beyond.

## Other healthy choices for kids

100% fruit juice (no sugar added) should be an occasional treat—no more than about a ½ cup per day. While juice contains some nutrients, it also has a lot of calories. Support whole food options instead. Teach kids that eating a piece of fruit or some cut-up vegetables is a better choice than reaching for juice. They'll get important nutrients and fibre, and will feel satisfied longer. Children and youth who eat vegetables and fruit five times a day are less likely to be overweight or obese.

## Be your kids' best role model

If you make drinking water and choosing healthy options like fruit and vegetables a routine at home, your kids are more likely to make healthy choices throughout the day. That's especially true if children see that the adults they are with during the day, such as teachers and day care workers, make the same healthy choices.



### Make meal time family time

Regular family meals, away from TV and other electronic distractions, are good for children's health in many ways. Researchers say that children in families that eat together often are less likely to drink sugar-sweetened beverages or eat foods high in sugar. Family meals also seem to increase the amount of vegetables children eat.

**Make water the drink of choice at family meals.**

## Let's get started!

All kinds of groups will be joining forces in our community to support the **Water does Wonders** theme. There will be awareness campaigns and new policies and programs, all aimed at making fresh drinking water easy to access in the places where kids spend time.

Remember: water is essential for good health. It's the simple, convenient, low-cost option for quenching thirst. Let's encourage our kids to make water their first choice!

**To learn more about the activities in our community or to get involved, contact your Healthy Kids Community Challenge project manager:**

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Name

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email

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Telephone

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Website

Learn more about healthy eating for kids at [Ontario.ca/healthykids](http://Ontario.ca/healthykids)

