



BUL 1133

Why Not Water?

LONG LIVE IDAHO BULLETIN SERIES

Annie Roe

Eat Smart Idaho Director, Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Idaho

Kathryn Hickock

Registered Dietician, Chapa-De Indian Health, Auburn, California

Joey Peutz

Southern District Director, University of Idaho Extension, Caldwell Research and Extension Center

Shelly Johnson

Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension, Kootenai County

Siew Guan Lee

Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension, Twin Falls County

Water is just fine, thanks. Drink water or low-fat milk instead of soda.

Water and low-fat milk are low-cost, low-calorie alternatives to sugar-sweetened drinks. Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages may increase the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, and dental cavities. Alternatively, water is necessary to carry nutrients throughout the body. It is also important to help regulate body temperature and lubricate joints. Low-fat milk is a great source of calcium and vitamin D (fortified), which are important for building strong bones.



Drink and serve water or low-fat milk instead.

Water and low-fat milk are healthy, low-cost alternatives to sweetened drinks.



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Flavor or infuse water with fruit, vegetables, or herbs.

Add berries; slices of lemon, lime, or cucumber; or herbs to water to add flavor without the added sugar. Rinse all produce under cold running water before slicing it or adding it to your drinking water. If you make a large pitcher of infused water, store it in the fridge at 40°F or lower. For best quality, consume it within twenty-four hours. However, infused water can be safely stored for up to six days, just make sure to inspect it for any spoilage before consuming it. Consider keeping freshly washed and sliced produce in the fridge, ready to add to single servings.



Skip the sugar.

Soda, sugary drinks and flavored coffees with syrups add a lot of calories with little to no nutritional value. They may increase the occurrence of cavities and soda may increase the risk of bone fractures later in life.



Stay hydrated on the go.

Carry a refillable water bottle throughout the day. Having water easily on hand helps to prevent thirst and to save money. For tips on cleaning reusable water bottles, check out University of Idaho BUL 971, *H₂O to Go: Staying Hydrated Safely!*

If you are currently active or adopting a new physical activity plan, staying hydrated is essential. Indeed, it is important to replace the fluids you lose through sweat. If you become dehydrated, your body has trouble regulating its body temperature and heartbeat. Being well hydrated increases your endurance, prevents muscle cramps, and helps you maintain your concentration. Many color charts depict urine color that indicate varying degrees of hydration. Essentially, lighter urine indicates good hydration (the lighter the more hydrated a person is). Darker urine may signify dehydration.

Water is the best drink for your body—whether it's straight from the tap or flavored with fruit.

Simple How-To

The amount of water a person needs to drink throughout the day varies based on age, sex, and activity level. The Dietary Reference Intakes provide specific guidelines and more details about the functions of water in the body. Making small changes through the day to choose water or low-fat milk over sugar-sweetened beverages helps you achieve your hydration goals.

Try out some of the suggestions from the following table.

Age	Goal*
Under 8 years	3–5 cups
9–13 years	7–8 cups
14–18 years	8–11 cups
19+ years	9–13 cups

*Goals are total daily intakes, including drinking water, based on the Dietary Reference Intakes.



Morning	Breakfast	At Work or School	After Work or School	Dinner
Wake up with water: Put a glass of water beside your bed to enjoy when you wake up.	Use low-fat milk on your morning cereal. Mix ¾s water with ¼ 100% fruit juice (3:1 ratio)	Pack a water bottle to sip throughout the day. Opt for sugar-free seltzer water instead of soda.	Make and drink an infused water as an afternoon activity. Refresh with a simple glass of ice water.	Choose low-fat milk or water as a beverage.

Further Reading

For more tips and ideas, check out Eat Smart Idaho: In the Kitchen, <https://eatmartidahointhekitchen.com>.

For tips on cleaning reusable water bottles, see UI BUL 971, *H₂O to Go: Staying Hydrated Safely!*, <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/publications/bul-0971>.



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