



DRINK WATER

WATER IN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



NHS
Grampian

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

- Some children and young people do not drink enough water. Low fluid intake can lead to health problems and can affect their concentration and ability to learn.
- Aberdeenshire Council is improving access to filtered, cold drinking water in schools, through the installation of water stations.
- The need for pupils to have access to water in school has been supported by the Scottish Executive. In one of its latest documents, *Hungry for Success*, it stated:
"It is recognised that children need access to adequate amounts of fluids within the school day. Drinking water, which is free, fresh and chilled, should be provided in each school."

Why is water good for health?

This leaflet is to inform parents/guardians about the benefits of drinking water and how they can encourage their children to drink enough water.

If children and young people do not drink enough fluids, the most important of these being water, they can become dehydrated.

Dehydration can cause a variety of symptoms and these may include:

- Reduced ability to concentrate.
- Low energy levels and tiredness.
- Increased irritability.
- Loss of appetite.
- Development of headaches.

Increasing water intake may help children and young people to concentrate more effectively, increase their energy levels and generally make them feel healthier. It may also mean they are consuming less sugary drinks which should help them reduce any damage to their teeth.

Is your child drinking enough water?

Children and young people will quite often not feel thirsty until they are dehydrated. Therefore it is very important that they get into the habit of drinking water before they actually feel thirsty.

The easiest way for you or your child to check whether they are dehydrated is by being aware of the colour of their urine. Urine should be a pale straw colour and be odourless. If it is a deep yellow, cloudy colour with a strong smell this may indicate they are not drinking enough water. Water is more effective at reducing dehydration than fizzy drinks.



Water bottles

It may be possible for your child to purchase a plastic water bottle from their school at a small cost.

Recommended instructions for cleaning water bottles:

- We recommend washing bottles on a daily basis in hot soapy water, rinsing well and leaving them to air dry or washing them in the dishwasher on the top shelf.
- Regular sterilisation in a weak Milton-type solution may also help keep them clean.

These instructions will help to eradicate possible bacteria that come from hands and mouths. The cleaning instructions should also be applied to all bottles and not just those purchased at school.

Guidance for schools

To support this *Water in Schools* Initiative within the school and classroom, the education service of Aberdeenshire Council is encouraging pupils to...

drink more water

bring a plastic bottle with them into school which they can keep with them to drink from. Bottles being provided from home should have a sports cap which should avoid water being spilled

make sure their water bottle is washed and replaced regularly

...and schools to...

provide guidance for pupils on the times that it is most appropriate to have access to the water stations in schools, and where they are able to drink from their bottles in the school environment e.g. not near computers and electrical equipment

provide guidance to pupils who will be made aware that access to drinking water in the school environment may be withdrawn if abused

encourage pupils to fill and drink from their bottles from the designated water stations only and not from any other taps on the school premises

encourage pupils to have a plastic water bottle with them in school which they can keep with them to drink from. Bottles being provided from home should be clear, made of plastic and have a sports cap which should avoid water being spilled

emphasise that parents/pupils are responsible for making sure any water bottle is washed and replaced regularly

More information

To find out about more about the benefits of water, you can visit the following websites:

www.wateriscoolinschools.org.uk

Aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of drinking water.

www.water.org.uk/home/resources-and-links/water-for-health

Information on the health benefits of water.

www.highland-spring.com/lifestyle.asp?pageID=3.2

Facts and figures, posters and activity sheets.

Parental support

We are sure parents/guardians will recognise the health benefits associated with drinking water. We feel this is a very important initiative and would look to parents to support it. We hope that messages received in school about the importance of drinking water will be reinforced in the home.

For further information contact the Education & Recreation Service, Aberdeenshire Council on 01224 664883.