



Signs of dehydration

When our bodies don't have enough water, we are said to be dehydrated.

One of the first signs of dehydration is feeling thirsty.

If you think you may not be getting enough fluids, check if you have any of these other common signs of dehydration:

- dark-coloured urine and not passing much urine when you go to the toilet
- headaches
- lack of energy
- feeling lightheaded

Types of drinks

Try to choose healthier drinks as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Many soft drinks are high in sugar. Food and drinks that are high in sugar are often high in calories, and eating too many calories can make you more likely to gain weight.

Some energy drinks are high in both sugar and caffeine.

Checking the nutrition labels on soft drinks, such as fruit juices and fizzy drinks, can help you make healthier choices.

Water

Water is the healthiest choice for quenching your thirst at any time. It has no calories and contains no sugars that can damage teeth.

If you don't like the taste of plain water, try sparkling water or add a slice of lemon or lime. You could also add some squash or fruit juice for flavour.

Milk

Milk is a good source of calcium, a mineral that helps build and maintain healthy bones.

It also contains vitamins and other minerals, and does not cause tooth decay.

For a healthy choice, choose semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk. Limit your intake of flavoured milks, milkshakes, condensed milk and milk-based energy or malt drinks because these contain added sugar, which is bad for teeth.

Milk is especially important for young children. They should drink whole milk until they are at least two years old, because they may not get as many calories as they need from lower-fat milks.

Fruit juices and smoothies

Fruit juice and fruit smoothies contain a variety of vitamins that are good for our health.

A glass (150ml) of fruit juice counts as one of your recommended five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. But juice can only ever count as one portion a day, no matter how much you drink. This is because it does not contain the fibre found in whole fruits and vegetables.

Fruit juice also contains sugar that can damage teeth. It's best to drink it with a meal because this can help protect teeth.

The sugars found naturally in whole fruit are less likely to cause tooth decay because the sugar is contained within the structure of the fruit. When fruit is juiced or blended, the sugars are released. Once released, these sugars can damage teeth, especially if juice is drunk frequently.

When you buy fruit juice, check the labels carefully and choose 100% fruit juice with no added sugar. These drinks count as one of your 5 a day. Watch out for "juice drinks", which can contain as little as 5% fruit juice and a lot of added sugar, and do not count as one of your 5 a day.

Learn more about [5 a day](#).

Fizzy drinks and squashes

Fizzy drinks, squashes and juice drinks contain lots of sugar and very few nutrients, so keep them to a minimum.

Their high sugar content means they are high in calories, and foods that are high in calories can contribute towards becoming overweight. Cutting down on these drinks is a good way to reduce the number of calories you consume, while not missing out on any nutrients.

Likewise, getting children to drink fewer sugary drinks is a good way to reduce the amount of sugar they consume. Children who drink a lot of sugary drinks are more likely to become overweight.

The added sugar in these drinks also means they can damage teeth. If you do have sugary or fizzy drinks, drinking them with meals can help reduce the damage to teeth.

The best drinks to give children are water, milk and milkshakes without added sugar.

If you or your children like fizzy drinks, try diluting fruit juice with sparkling water instead. Remember to dilute squashes well to reduce the sugar content in the drink.

Diet versions of fizzy drinks also contain very few nutrients, so milk or water are much healthier choices, especially for children.

Energy drinks

Energy drinks often contain high levels of caffeine. They are often high in sugar. They may also contain other stimulants and sometimes vitamins and minerals or herbal substances.

The caffeine levels in these drinks vary, but there is often around 80mg of caffeine in a small 250ml can. This is the same as two cans of cola or a small mug of coffee.

People who are sensitive to caffeine should consume high-caffeine food and drinks only in moderation.

Energy drinks are not suitable for babies or children.

Pregnant women should limit their intake of energy drinks as they are often high in caffeine (see below). Check the labels of energy drinks

as they often say that the drink is not suitable for children or pregnant women.

Sports drinks

Sports drinks can be useful when you're doing endurance sports and need an energy boost.

However, they are no different to any other sugary soft drinks, which means they are high in calories and contribute to tooth decay.

Unless you're taking part in endurance sports, water is the healthier choice and the best way to replace water that you have lost.

REFERENCE:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/water-drinks.aspx>