



“I’m Thirsty...”

Choosing Healthier Beverages For Your Family



By Debbie Slutzky

How many times a day do we hear this from our kids? Why are they always so thirsty and what can we give them that isn’t full of sugar and artificial flavors and colors?

They are thirsty because 85% of the body and 90% of the brain are made up of water. We all need to be continually replenishing and hydrating ourselves because every day our bodies lose water through sweating, urinating and bowel movements. A child can become tired and unmotivated even with mild dehydration (as little as 2% loss of body water).

The best drink choice is always water. Drinking water is vital to many bodily functions including temperature regulation, transporting nutrients and oxygen to the blood and lubricating joints.



To add some natural flavors to water, try adding lemon, lime, cucumber, berries, or a splash of 100% fruit juice.

Cucumber Water

(serves 2)

1 large cucumber, peeled
3 cups water

Slice cucumber in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon, then cut into chunks. Put cucumber and water into a blender, puree and serve immediately.

ARE ALL BOTTLED WATERS CREATED EQUAL?

Some people can taste the difference, others can’t. In fact while the bottles and packaging do look different, so are the sources. Aquafina and Dasani are municipal tap water; Poland Spring comes from natural springs; and Fiji and Evian are imported from natural water supplies. Smartwater is tap water enhanced with electrolytes. The choice is yours... it comes down to taste preference, price and availability.

Sparkling water can add a different dimension to water and can be spruced up a bit to become an alternative to plain water. Try these:

Bubble Water & Juice

2 cups 100% fruit juice
2 cups sparkling water or seltzer
Put into a pitcher, add ice if desired and serve.

Bubbly Fruit Tea

1 cup fruity herbal tea (preferably gentle decaf teas like chamomile, hibiscus and mint)

1 tsp honey or agave nectar

1 ½ cups fruit juice

1 ½ cups sparkling water or seltzer
Make a cup of fruity herbal tea, add honey or agave and stir. Allow tea to cool. Combine with juice and sparkling water in a pitcher. Serve cool.

STAY HYDRATED WITH FOODS

If water just isn’t satisfying, you can keep your kids hydrated with fresh fruits and vegetables, as they contain mostly water. Those that contain the most water are:

Food	%water
Cucumber	96%
Iceberg Lettuce	95%
Tomatoes	94%
Peppers	94%
Mushrooms	92%
Watermelon	91%
Strawberries	91%
Spinach	91%
Cantaloupe	90%
Honeydew Melon	90%

Woman’s Day

And, believe it or not... other foods that provide a good amount of water are lowfat yogurt (85%), cooked oatmeal (84%) and baked potato (75%).

So, now that you’ve offered water, bottled water, sparkling water, and cucumbers and you’re still hearing the “I’m thirsty” mantra,

what are you to do? Don’t give in to soda and Kool Aid; there are still options. For example...

FRUIT JUICE

Walk down the beverage aisle in the supermarket and it is mind boggling to see all of the different brands of fruit juice. Their packaging screams for our attention with their bright colors and promises of vitamins and minerals.

While some fruit juice is okay, keep in mind, not all fruit juices are created equal. It is important to look at the labels and follow these guidelines when shopping for juice:

- Buy “100% pure fruit juice” (preferably organic).
- Don’t buy drinks called: “drink”, “pouch”, “cocktail”, “beverage”, “ade” and “juice blends” – they are typically junk beverages, have no nutritional value and contain empty calories that can lead to weight gain, poor nutrition and cavities.
- Buy cloudy juices. A rule of thumb is that usually the cloudier the juice, the more nutritious it is. There should be some pulp or sediment at the bottom of the bottle to show the juice’s origins are still intact.
- Don’t buy juices that contain refined sugar or high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).
- Buy nectar juices such as apricot, peach, pear and prune. While nectar tends to have more calories, more nutrients are pre-

served during processing such as beta-carotene, protein, vitamin A, Vitamin B-6 and iron.

- Don't buy juices with artificial sweeteners such as acesulfame, aspartame (Equal), crystalline fructose (HFCS), dextrose (corn sugar or grape sugar), HFCS, saccharin (Sweet 'n Low), or sucralose (Splenda).

Note: It's always a good idea to dilute juice with 50% water and 50% juice.

SMOOTHIES

Smoothies are a great drink to get fruit and veggies into your kids' diets. They are a good addition to any meal or as a snack. Try experimenting with whatever fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables you have or try these recipes:

Fall Fruit & Veggie Smoothie

(serves 2)

- 1 small red beet, peeled and coarsely chopped (steamed first to make them tender, about 10 min)
- 1 medium sized carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped (steamed first to make them tender, about 10 min)
- 1 sweet apple, such as Honeycrisp or Pink Lady, cored and coarsely chopped
- 1 ripe pear, such as red Bartlett or red Anjou, cored and coarsely

chopped

- 2 cups water
 - 2 Tbsp lemon juice
 - 2 tsp minced fresh ginger
- Combine all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
126 calories per serving, 0g fat, 33g carbs

Peanut Butter – Banana “Meal-in-a-Cup” Smoothie

(serves 1-2)

- 1 banana
 - 2 Tbsp natural creamy peanut butter
 - 1 cup 1% milk
 - 1 Tbsp raw honey
 - 1 cup ice cubes
- Combine all the ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
288 calories, 9g protein, 45g carbs, 4g fiber, 10g fat (2g sat fat), 6mg cholesterol, 115mg sodium

Strawberry-Orange “Vitamin C” Smoothie

(serves 1-2)

- 2 cups frozen strawberries
 - 1 cup nonfat vanilla or plain yogurt
 - ½ cup orange juice
 - 1 TBSP strawberry preserves (optional)
- Combine all the ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
209 calories, 8g protein, 47g carbs, 3g fiber, 0g fat, 2mg cholesterol, 85mg sodium

MOCKTAILS

Mocktails are not only fun to say, but they are also fun to drink in different shaped glasses or served with a silly straw. They are another way to get kids to drink their fruit.

Black Cherry Spritzer

(serves 1-2)

- Combine ¼ cup pitted black cherries and 1 tsp agave nectar in a glass; crush gently. Add 8 oz. seltzer and stir. Top with ice and serve.
44 calories; 12g carbs

Pineapple Cordial

(serves 4-6)

- 1 ripe pineapple, peeled thickly-use the peels for this recipe and save the flesh to eat
 - 2 limes, thinly sliced
 - 3 whole cloves
 - 4-5 slices fresh ginger root, peeled and crushed
 - 2 pints boiling water
 - Agave nectar to taste
- Place pineapple peel, ginger, limes and whole cloves in a large bowl. Pour boiling water over the mixture, cover and allow to sit for 24 hours. Strain the liquid, discarding the pineapple peel, limes and spices. Dissolve agave nectar to taste and serve chilled with a garnish of fresh lime.

JUICING

Juicing fresh fruits and vegetables is an excellent way for the family to easily absorb and digest plant-based nutrients. If you have the time and a juicer, juicing can be fun, creative, tasty and a good use for whatever is in your refrigerator. Suggested items to juice include:

Vegetables: beets, broccoli, carrots, celery, fennel, kale, parsley, romaine lettuce, spinach, and wheatgrass

Fruits: apples, blueberries, blackberries, grapefruit, lemon, oranges, pears, raspberries and strawberries

Apply any or all of the above suggestions and the mantra just might change to “I have to go to the bathroom....”



WHAT ABOUT SPORTS DRINKS?

They do have a place if kids are exercising intensely or playing sports for an hour or more or if they are sweating profusely. Sports drinks provide carbs and electrolytes in these situations. However, I would advise against sports drinks on a regular basis.

WHY NOT SODA?

Soda is high in calories and sugar and contributes to childhood obesity and diabetes (HFCS turns to fat faster than sugar). Soda also contains phosphoric acid which causes calcium to be excreted from the bones.

WHY NOT DIET SODA?

A typical diet soda includes: carbonated water, caramel color, aspartame (NutraSweet), phosphoric acid, artificial flavors, potassium benzoate, citric acid, caffeine... nothing good in here.

