Stay hydrated to stay well

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Don't underestimate your body's need for water! Did you know that water makes up about 55 percent to 75 percent of your body weight? It carries nutrients and oxygen to your body cells and carries away waste products. Body water protects organs, lubricates joints, regulates temperature and provides the backdrop for the body's many chemical reactions.

Drink water regularly and often, at least 8 to 10 cups of water each day. Fluids such as milk, 100 percent fruit juices, and other beverages can provide some of this water. Even juicy vegetables and fruits, and "liquid" foods like soup, shakes, and ice cream provide essential fluids.

During hot weather, avoid beverages with caffeine. These act as a diuretic and actually cause your body to lose water. Also, drink more fluids during hot weather and exercise to replace any water lost to perspiration.

Don't wait until you feel thirsty to take a drink! Thirst isn't always a good indicator of fluid need, especially if you've been exercising or working in a warm environment.

Offer young children fluids often. They don't get thirsty until they're already mildly dehydrated. Set a schedule for "water or beverage breaks" when supervising children. Physical activity, heat stress, illness, and fever increase a child's need for fluids.

Both children and older adults are at greater risk for dehydration. Both may not "feel thirsty" after fluid loss, and both are more sensitive to high temperatures.

In one community study of older persons, approximately 10 percent were mildly dehydrated and 1 percent were severely dehydrated. Older adults are likely to become dehydrated because they simply drink less fluid, eat less food, and...
Using fans instead of an air conditioner will give the most savings, up to 80 percent off cooling costs. Using fans along with your air conditioner increases air circulation and makes you feel cooler at a higher temperature. By using fans, the thermostat can be raised without losing comfort, resulting in a 15 percent to 30 percent savings.

Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. When leaving a room, turn the fan off.

In addition to ceiling fans, oscillating fans or box fans also can be used to help circulate air in the home. Oscillating fans rotate from side to side and cool a wide area. Box fans do not rotate, but they can be placed wherever air circulation is needed. Box fans are not as energy efficient as ceiling or oscillating fans.

A popular alternative is the whole-house fan, which can save up to 60 percent of cooling costs if used in place of an air conditioner. The whole-house fan is placed in the attic where it draws hot, stale air up through roof vents. Fresh air is drawn in through the windows of the house, and this breeze makes the indoor temperature seem cooler. This is an energy-efficient cooling option, but the whole-house fan may not be powerful (continued on page 5).

Energy-saving tips:

1. Increase the temperature on your air conditioner at least 3 degrees.

2. Don’t run the air conditioner when no one is home. Save by installing a timer that turns it on before you get home.

3. Make sure your home is properly insulated. Weather-strip doors and windows to keep cold air inside.

4. Reduce heat gain through windows with shades, draperies, reflective coverings, awnings or louvers on windows that receive afternoon sun. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce heat entering your house by as much as 80 percent.

Remember! Heat can kill. During extreme heat warnings, if your home does not have air conditioning, go to a public building with air conditioning each day for several hours.

For more ideas on how to be energy smart and cut your utility costs this summer, contact your local University Outreach and Extension Center.
In this day and age, parents seem to be on a whirlwind tour, rushing around to get everything done. Sometimes we get so busy that we forget how important it is, both for ourselves and for our children, to listen to what our children are thinking and feeling.

Although summer is not necessarily a less hectic time (just think about ball games, swimming, camps, etc.), at least there is no nightly homework to do on top of other activities and family time. This could be the perfect time to get to know your child a little better.

To achieve this goal, here are several suggestions that might help:

- **When you have a conversation with your child, try not to be hurried, hungry or angry.** Relax and take some time. As the old saying goes, “They are only young once.” They need our undivided attention, even if it can only be for a few minutes at a time. Let someone else answer the phone, or turn on the answering machine.

- **Watch for those “connectable” moments.** If your child says, “I really liked that book I just read,” use this as a time to ask, “Why? What is it that made it most interesting? Tell me about the characters.”

- **Share old photos, news clippings, and scrapbooks with your child.** Answer questions he/she may have about when you were young. Can you get a feeling of what you think your child believes you were like as a child?

- **Take advantage of new technologies to communicate with your child.** Send e-mails and ask questions that require more of an answer than “yes,” “no,” or “fine.”

- **Engage in fun, imaginative conversations.** If your child could be a certain plant, animal or TV character, who might he/ she choose and why?

- **Remember there are always new things we can learn about our children.** What we learned last month may be gone tomorrow. What we thought was their favorite color at the age of 4 might not be the same at 14.

- **Learn as much as you can about your child’s friends.** What qualities does your child like or dislike in a friend? What makes that “best” friend so special?

- **Encourage your child to keep scrapbooks or journals, especially during vacation times with special relatives or friends.** Your child may need some help putting things together, but ultimately it will be his/ her special project and memories to look at over time. It can also be a “connectable” moment for your child to tell you about all the things he/ she did and saw.

- **Ask for your child’s opinion occasionally.** Ask what he/she thinks you should wear, or where to put the new chair.

- **Let your child be the photographer at the next family gathering.** Your child can take photos and, as you look at them together, tell you which are his/ her favorites and
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often don’t feel thirsty. Some medications and health problems may interfere with a person’s ability to recognize thirst.

What are the signs of dehydration? Decreased frequency of urination, dark, concentrated urine, and a tongue that appears “coated” rather than wet. Left unchecked, dehydration can lead to heat stroke and death. In older adults, dehydration can lead to renal failure, delirium, kidney stones, pressure ulcers, tooth problems, falls, and constipation.

Tips for keeping active kids hydrated

Dr. Suzanne Steen, D.Sc., R.D., a Pennsylvania sports nutritionist, offers these tips to help keep kids hydrated:

♦ Have kids drink 10 to 14 ounces of cold water 1 to 2 hours before the activity. Then another 10 ounces from 10 to 15 minutes before the activity. Offer kids water every 15 minutes while they’re active. They should drink at least 3 to 4 ounces. Plain, cold water is best because it’s quickly absorbed by the body.

♦ Ask children to bring their own personal water bottle. Children drink more water if they have their own supply.

♦ When using flavored drinks, stick to those with a sugar concentration of 6 percent to 8 percent or less. This equals 15 to 18 grams of carbohydrate per 8 ounces (check the label). More concentrated drinks slow the absorption of water into the body. While many sports drinks fit this guideline, fruit juices and other sugar-flavored drinks need to be diluted by mixing with an equal amount of water.

♦ Avoid carbonated soft drinks. One can of soda provides 120 calories and about 30 to 60 mg caffeine. Caffeine-containing beverages cause the body to lose fluid. Excess calories from sugary beverages are tied to increased obesity in children.

♦ Weigh young athletes before and after practice and games. Each pound lost should be replaced by drinking 16 ounces (2 cups) of fluid. Relying on water to quench thirst is not only more healthful, but it saves money!

Quenching thirst with fruit juice

Although 100 percent fruit juice is healthy (i.e., orange juice is a good source of vitamin C, potassium and folic acid), the American Academy of Pediatrics recently warned that too much fruit juice interferes with a child’s growth and development. Children who fill up on juice between meals do not eat enough nutritious food.

Key points from the American Academy of Pediatricians’ recommendations:

♦ Limit fruit juice consumption to no more than 4 to 12 OUNCES per day, depending on the child’s age.

  • For children 1 to 6 years old: limit to 4 to 6 ounces per day.
  • For children 7 to 18 years old: limit to 8 to 12 ounces, or 2 servings per day.

♦ Encourage children to eat whole fruits for their recommended daily fruit intake.

♦ Infants, children, and adolescents should not drink unpasteurized juice.

According to Susan Nitzke with University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension: “Many of the concerns over excess juice consumption apply to other beverages, especially sodas and fruit ‘drinks.’ The above recommendations represent approximately half of the daily fruit serving recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid. In other words, your child can get half his/ her daily fruit in the form of juice, but routinely going beyond that amount may be excessive. Excessive juice consumption may be associated with diarrhea, flatulence, abdominal distention, and tooth decay.”

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Here are some other guidelines:

- Read labels on all fruit-type beverages. Fruit drinks need only contain 5 percent fruit juice. Or think of it as needing to drink 20 cups of fruit drink to equal one cup of fruit juice. Buy 100 percent fruit juice whenever possible.

- To add more water to the diet and stretch 100 percent fruit juices, dilute with water. For a treat, make juice spritzers by mixing half 100 percent juice with half sparkling water.

- Encourage your child to drink lowfat (1 percent) and nonfat milk at meals and snacks. Milk provides many needed nutrients and is also a source of fluid.

- Keep water easily accessible. Store ordinary tap water in the refrigerator to increase its appeal.

- Drink more water and less soda pop yourself. Set a good example for your child!

Be a fan of good ventilation
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Enough when the temperature exceeds 85°F, or when the humidity exceeds 75 percent.

One disadvantage of the whole-house fan is the windows must be open at least part of the time, and humidity, dust, and pollen control may be a problem.

Any type of fan used in the home will increase air circulation. Circulated air helps people feel cooler at higher temperatures and requires less work from the air-conditioning unit. Since fans use less energy than air-conditioning units, it is well worth investing in some type of fan to help cool your home.

Don’t get burned by high-energy prices this summer!

When choosing a ceiling fan, it is important to remember:

- Small fans circulate air 4 to 6 feet from their centers; larger fans circulate air 8 to 10 feet from their centers.

- Fit the size of the fan to the size of the room.

- For a ceiling fan to work most efficiently, the fan blades should be about 8 to 10 inches from the ceiling and 7 feet above the floor. This allows for adequate air circulation.

- Some ceiling fans are reversible and can be set to blow upward in the winter to send warm air downward. This action is not recommended in rooms with standard 8-foot ceilings, but for rooms with high or vaulted ceilings.

- Buy a fan with five blades instead of four.

Other factors to consider when buying a ceiling fan are number of speed options, noise produced, installation difficulty, and warranty provided. Most ceiling fans cost between $40 and $200, and many can be installed by the homeowner.
Free cancer screenings available to eligible Missouri women

Missouri women 18 years of age and older who meet certain income guidelines may qualify for free cervical and/or breast cancer screenings from the Missouri Department of Health, in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Social Services.

Eligibility for both types of free screenings depends on total family income and number of family members. A woman in a family of two, for example, may be eligible if her annual family income is $22,500 or less. Other age and health history requirements also may apply.

Women with Medicaid, Medicare Part B or HMO insurance are not eligible.

Cervical cancer is one of the most common causes of cancer and one of the most preventable and treatable. Early detection through annual Pap tests is the best protection because cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent curable when found early.

Regular screening with a mammogram is the most important action a woman can take to detect breast cancer at its earliest stages. A mammogram can identify breast abnormalities that may be cancerous before physical symptoms develop.

To determine eligibility, or for more information about free cancer screenings in your area, call Pat Jennings, Missouri Department of Social Services, 636/441-2422.

Get to know your child

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why. He/ she might also provide insights into what prompted certain shots.

When you call Grandma or Aunt Susie, let your child have telephone time as well. Your child can use this time to express himself to others. After the conversation, ask: “How did Grandma sound?” or “What did Aunt Susie say she was doing?”

At the end of each day, reflect on what you learned about your child. In what way do you know your son or daughter better? In what way do you want to get to know your child better?

Sharon Gilchrest O’Neill, a marriage and family therapist, wrote in an article published in “Work and Family Life,” February 1999: “The more we learn about children, the more our children learn about themselves. This is one of the greatest gifts we can give them.”

Let this be the summer you get to know your child just a little better!

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