

Fluid Needs for Children

Water is often an overlooked nutrient for many people, including children. About 60% of our body is made up of water, and it is important in just about every bodily function. Water carries oxygen and nutrients to every part of the body, and also carries waste products out of the body. Water protects our joints and organs, and keeps our body temperature stable. Without enough water, our bodies will not function well.

Fluids are especially important for children, because it is even harder for their bodies to control temperature. Children may also not notice thirst as easily as adults do. By the time a child says they are thirsty their bodies are already low on water.

How much fluid do children need? Use this chart as a guide, but keep in mind that your child may need more if they are very active, sick or if it is hot outside.

<u>Child's weight (pounds)</u>	<u>Fluid Needs (cups per day)*</u>
Up to 30	4 – 5
31 – 41	5 – 6
42 – 63	6 – 7
64 or more	7 – 8

*Be sure to include at least _____ cups of milk per day to meet calcium needs.

The color of your child's urine will let you know if they are drinking enough. If their urine is very pale yellow or straw colored, they are drinking enough. If the urine is dark, they need to drink more.

Water is the healthiest beverage, but other liquids can also be used as fluids. Flavored or unflavored seltzer, milk and 100% fruit juices can count as a fluid choice. Limit 100% fruit juice to 4 ounces per day due to its high content of natural sugars, which can affect your child's teeth and potential for weight gain. Beverages with caffeine such as iced tea and many sodas make your body lose water.

If you have any further questions, a Reliant Medical Group Nutrition Education Specialist is available to help: call (508 852-6175, or 1 (888) 392-0183