

Steer children toward water and milk consumption

Q My daughter only likes drinking sodas, 100% juice and energy drinks. She is physically active and appears healthy. Is drinking water and milk really that important? — JK, Winterville

A Michael Denning is a third-year medical student and future pediatric physician, he wanted to delve into the importance of water and milk consumption among youth and how to encourage these healthy dietary habits. Here are his thoughts

“Do you want to grow up to be big and strong?” It’s a phrase we all heard countless times growing up, often accompanied by images of athletes or superheroes. What does that really mean? How can we help our youth achieve this goal?

Regarding hydration, water is an unsung hero of our health. Yet, studies have shown that water intake among children and adolescents falls below recommended levels. During 2015–18, U.S. children and adolescents drank 23 ounces of plain water daily, while adults consumed 44 ounces on average. The experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics offer the general rule that kids ages 1-3 should drink about 4 cups (32 ounces) of water a day, those between 4-8 years old should drink around 5 (40 ounces) cups, and, lastly, kids older than 8 should drink at least 7 cups (56 ounces) of water a day.

Amounts should be increased if youth are more physically active, or the weather is hotter. Alarming, plain water intake is significantly lower among certain groups, including younger



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children, non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic children, and those from lower-income households.

Similarly, dairy consumption is critical for youth, particularly during childhood and adolescence, when growth and development peak. Dairy includes calcium for bone health, protein for growth and a range of essential vitamins and minerals for overall well-being.

Also, dairy products are critical for improved dental health, as they strengthen tooth enamel and protect against cavities. However, the gap between current and recommended intakes of dairy foods continues to widen. The MyPlate.gov website recommends varying amounts of dairy foods depending on age, emphasizing the importance of dairy for bone health, protein intake, and overall nutrition.

The amount of dairy foods children needs each day depends on their age and can vary between 1 2/3 to 2 cups for toddlers under 2, 2 to 2 1/2 cups for children ages 2-8, and 3 cups for children and adolescents 9-18. Fortunately, dairy comes in various forms and flavors, whether whole, low-fat, skim milk, yogurt, or cheese. If your child has a milk allergy or sensitivity, please ask their doctor for guidance on how to best ensure he or she gets these critical nutrients. Dairy is a food easily incorporated into any meal.

Water is essential for hydration, temperature regulation, digestive, skin, and joint health. Consuming water positively impacts youths’ physical performance, offering them increased endurance and coordination, with decreased risk of heat-related



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Water is an unsung hero of our health. Yet, studies have shown that water intake among children and adolescents falls below recommended levels.

illness and muscle cramps.

More importantly, staying hydrated supports cognitive function. Our youth are the future, and by providing adequate amounts of water, we can improve their focus, alertness, memory and mood, thus completely eliminating the need for energy drinks, which youth should avoid as they are packed with sugar and caffeine.

While juice is a good source of water the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the daily servings should be limited to 4 ounces for children ages 1-3 years, 4-6 ounces for children ages 4-6 years and 8 ounces for those 7 and older. With my patients, I am often asked about drinking tap water. Except for in unusual circumstance, tap water is a readily available source of

hydration that is completely fine to consume; those with access to a municipal water supply water also have the added benefit of having fluorinated water, which protects our teeth.

If you drink well water please reach out to the Pitt County Health Department at 902-3206 as they can check out the amount of fluoride in your water; there is a fee for this service but it will ensure you will know I there is too little or too much fluoride.

Water and dairy consumption touch many aspects of a child’s health and livelihood.

So, how can we encourage our youth to adopt these healthy habits? Leading by example is crucial; children often mimic the behavior of adults around them. Providing easy access to water by buying tiny refillable water

bottles and offering various dairy options can make consumption more appealing. Breakfast, a meal often skipped by adolescents, should be encouraged, as it is a great time to incorporate dairy in the form of milk or yogurt.

Most importantly, kids love to have fun, and nutrition can be fun. Adding natural flavors to water with berries, cucumbers, or citrus or purchasing colorful water bottles and allowing kids to decorate them can make water and the container an enjoyable and unique experience. Moreover, involving youth in meal preparation and creating dairy-themed activities, such as cheese-tasting events with string cheese or imaginary cooking classes focused on dairy-based recipes.

Also, positive reinforcement, such as praise and rewards, can motivate children to make healthier choices. With these opportunities, we can increase their appreciation for these foods.

However, responsibility doesn’t solely fall on the shoulders of parents or guardians. Teachers, health professionals, and policymakers also play vital roles in promoting water and dairy consumption among youth. Studies have shown a need for more active encouragement of drinking water in schools, highlighting the need for interventions to ensure adequate hydration during the school day.

It’s time to update and re-incorporate the age-old notion of growing up “big and strong” into our collective consciousness. As adults, we are responsible for guiding our youth toward healthy habits that will serve them well.

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Workouts help men over 60 build, maintain strength

EBONY WILLIAMS
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

As we age, muscle mass declines by 3-5% per decade. Decline for men starts to happen around age 60, according to Matthew Accetta, an exercise physiologist at the Hospital for Special Surgery.

“Once you hit age 60, the rate of muscle mass decline goes up, and you’ll lose even more muscle mass because you’re getting older, not producing as much testosterone, and you’re not as active,” Accetta told HSS.

Losing muscle mass increases the risk of falling and can make it difficult to do day-to-day activities such as walking, sitting, getting up and more. Although you can’t avoid getting older, there are exercises to help get stronger as you face the next stage in life.

Here are some strength-training workouts for men over 60 to help increase strength and balance.

ROWS

The single-arm row helps with posture by working the back muscles that help with sitting or standing upright. We row every day, from opening the door to the refrigerator to leaving the house to even picking up something from the ground.

So if you have a set of dumbbells, here’s how to do the exercise properly:

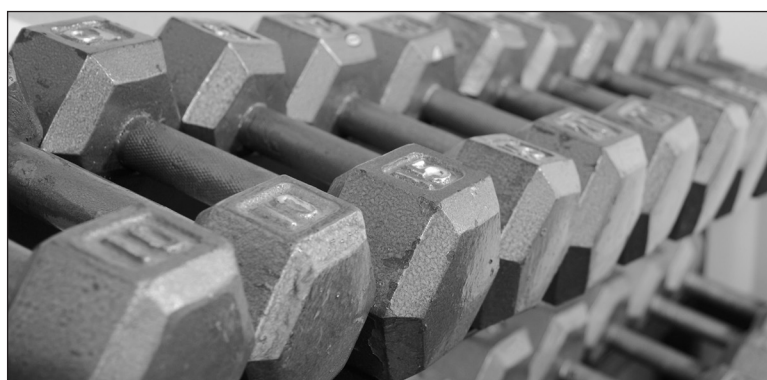
- While using a bench or a chair for assistance, start by holding a dumbbell in the right hand with the opposite leg, either on the bench or slightly in front of the right leg.

- Then imagine a string attached to your elbow slowly pulling it back.

- Keeping the core engaged let the dumbbell reach the side of your body and then return to the starting position and repeat on the other side.

SQUATS

According to AARP, squats are the No. 1 exercise to keep doing as you age.



ANDY PIATT/DREAMTIME/TNS

Strength training workouts for men over 60 help increase muscle mass and improve balance.

“When you have to go to the washroom, that’s a squat. When you get in the car, that’s a squat. Every time you sit down or stand up, that’s a squat. If you don’t do them well, it affects the way you live,” Eric Daw, a personal trainer dedicated to older adults and founder of Omni-Fitt, told AARP.

Here’s how to properly do the exercise:

- Decide how you want to squat: using a chair, free-standing, ropes, etc.

- With feet shoulder-width apart, begin to lower the body with the back straight, chest up and heels planted, then repeat.

BIRD DOGS

Bird dogs work the spine, abdominals and glutes while enhancing balance and coordination. Here’s how to properly do the exercise:

- While on the floor or mat and get on all fours.

- Keep hips level and try not to rotate the pelvis keeping the spine aligned.

- With the right hand coming forward, raise the left leg backward. Return to the start position and repeat on the other side.

The exercise seems simple enough, but it shouldn’t be rushed. Take your time to work on balance and coordination.

PLANKS

No matter how you choose to do planks — from using your knees, toes or assisted — you’re working the entire core, thighs, back, arms, glutes and more. It’s

the ideal exercise for strengthening the whole body while building endurance.

Here’s how to properly do a plank:

- Lie on the ground with your stomach on the floor or a mat.

- Then assume a push-up position by placing your weight on your forearms or palms.

- Hold the position for a few seconds, then slowly lower to the floor and repeat.

STANDING DUMBBELL PRESS

This exercise targets the lower back and shoulders and helps to improve balance. While doing standing dumbbell press, it’s important to engage the core, keeping it tight to help prevent injury in the lower back.

Here’s how to properly do the exercise:

- Stand with feet hip-width apart.

- Bring each dumbbell to shoulder level with your palms facing forward.

- Gently extend the arms above the head, slowly bring the weights down to the shoulder position and repeat.

When doing this exercise, it’s important to keep the range of motion controlled and not over-extend the weight above the head.

These exercises not only build strength but also increase balance, posture and mood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults 65 and older should work out for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, to strengthen muscles.

ASK THE DOCTORS

New sound machines can offer different frequencies

Q Our sound machine died, and my husband is shopping for a new one. It made sounds like rain and surf, which helped both of us sleep. The ads for some of the new machines talk about different colors of noise. Is that a real thing? Does it matter what kind we get?

A Noise is one of the primary disruptors of sleep. Yet, as the millions of people who use sound machines will attest, a specific type of noise can improve sleep. These mechanical devices deliver a blanket of continual sound. They not only mask and absorb disruptively loud, sharp and sudden noises, they can also aid in falling asleep more quickly and in staying asleep. These factors are important aspects of good-quality sleep, which plays a crucial role in physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

The hissing, whooshing and whirring sounds produced by sound machines have long been referred to simply as white noise. But recently, ads for some of the newer models have borrowed from the realm of sound engineering. Here, the language of sound expands the color wheel to include pink, green, brown, violet and blue noise. There’s even something known as velvet noise. The differences lie in the variety of specific frequencies of sound that are blended together to produce the sound.

White noise is constant sound that contains all of the frequencies in our audible spectrum, produced at equal amplitude. Because it contains all frequencies with equal intensity, white noise is effective at masking a range of external sounds. Pink noise eliminates some of the higher frequencies of white noise and stresses deeper sounds at a lower frequency. This can be easier on the ears, and thus more soothing than the blank static of white noise. Blue and violet noise also trade higher



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frequencies for the lower sounds of the spectrum.

Deeper still is brown noise, sometimes also known as red noise. If you’re thinking in terms of a sound machine, it would be the deep-toned setting that sounds like a moving train. Green noise splits the difference between white and pink noise. It is often associated with sounds in the natural world, such as a trickling waterfall, the surge of surf or the patter of rainfall on tree leaves. Because green noise includes mid-range frequencies, it can be particularly effective at masking the sound of human speech.

As for which color of sound is the best for sleep, there is no answer at this time. Perhaps in the future, a large and robust study will draw a conclusion. For now, though, it’s a matter of preference. One thing that has become clear is that it’s important to modulate the volume of the devices. Constant or repeated exposure to noise can have a detrimental effect on hearing. This is particularly true for infants and children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing sound machines at least 7 feet away from a child’s bed and keeping the volume at less than 50 decibels. If a machine doesn’t offer specifics about volume, the output can be checked with a smartphone decibel app.

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