

Nursing Needle

As the saying goes... "April showers bring May flowers". But to get those flowers, water is needed to make them grow. All living things need water to survive. That includes you and me. Without water our bodies would stop working properly. The body has important jobs to do and needs water to perform those jobs. Water is most of our blood. It helps to take oxygen and food to our bodies cells to perform their necessary functions. Water is also a part of the lymph system, also known as the immune system, to help fight off illness. Water is needed in the digestive tract to help digest food and assist in getting rid of wastes in the form of urine and feces. It is also the main ingredient in perspiration, called sweat. Water is part of the fluid to keep our joints moving smoothly. It is the saliva to keep the mouth moist and mucous to keep our eyes, ears, nose, throat, and "insides" smooth and slippery so everything runs around the body systems without getting stuck. So how does the body get enough of the water necessary to work? Most of the water comes from drinking at meal-time, or when thirsty. Foods, especially fruits and vegetables, provide the body with enough water to keep us working well. When exercising, the body will require more water intake than normal. If there is not enough water for your body, dehydration can occur. Dehydration keeps your body from being fast and

as sharp as you can be. If it continues, your body can become sick and not work right. Illness, exercise in extreme temperatures or lack of water intake can cause the body to not perform as it should.

More children are also drinking sugar sweetened fruit drinks, sodas, and sport drinks instead of milk or water at meals. With these changes, USA children are showing increased obesity rates due to the increased sugar content. Dental cavities, from the sugar, and erosion of tooth enamel from the acidity of sweetened drinks are also on the rise. Children are lacking necessary vitamins and minerals, especially calcium, that they get from milk. We wouldn't dream of giving our children a cup of coffee, but many of our children are getting that every day in the form of soda, tea, and chocolate. The United States Food and Drug Administration has not established any guidelines for caffeine intake and children, but it is wise to keep this to a minimum. Caffeine is a stimulant. It is defined as "a drug that stimulates the central nervous system which consists of the brain, spinal cord and nerves". Too much caffeine causes jitteriness, nervousness, stomach upset, headaches, and difficulty concentrating and sleeping. One caffeinated soda is equal to 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Caffeine is a diuretic, which means it causes the body to lose water. Our body needs water to function, why would we want our children's bodies to lose what it needs to work? Studies have shown that children who consume

caffeine on a regular basis tend to be overweight, have poor quality of sleep, and suffer from frequent headaches. Studies also show that caffeine may make children more hungry which in turn makes them take in more calories. There may also be a link to increased risk factors to Type 2 Diabetes. One research study demonstrated that girls have an increased risk of bone fractures during periods of high growth as they are substituting sugar sweetened drinks and sodas instead of milk and water.

Water is important for survival of all life on earth. Just as the rains from the sky bloom the flowers in May, water allows for the body to grow and function. Remember to use water on the outside to keep your body clean and healthy too.

In good health

Nurse Brandon