

LESSON: The Importance of Water (US)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the importance of water for the human body
- Recognize and recall examples of different sources of water for the body
- Understand why different groups of people need different amounts of water
- Recognize situations requiring increased water need
- Understand why we may want to limit our intake of sugar-sweetened beverages

LEVEL:



MATERIALS:

- Activity Sheet: Level 2 – How Much of Our Bodies Are Water?
- Activity Sheet: Level 2 – Track Your Water Intake
- Activity Sheet: Level 2 – Importance of Water Board Game
- PowerPoint: Level 2 – Importance of Water (US)
- Quiz: Level 2 – Importance of Water (US)

LESSON:

Starter: The purpose is to introduce the importance of water for grades 2-4 and to teach students different ways in which they can meet their daily water needs. The lesson is designed to provoke critical thinking about the reasoning behind why we want to make water our drink of choice and why we should try to limit sugar-sweetened beverages.

Section 1: Why is Water Important? What Does it Do for the Body?

*Ask Class: Why do you think water is important? What does it do for our bodies? *listen to response, create list together, recap and compare with the following**

Drinking water is important in order for the body to stay hydrated (*hydrated* - having enough water for your body to work well and do its important jobs). Water plays a large role in our bodies, as they are made up of about 60-70% water! Our bodies also use water to help with lots of important jobs. Some of these include:

- Helping with the body's different functions/jobs
- Removing waste from the body
- Keeping us cool
- Moving nutrients across the body

(*Nutrients* - things in food that help us grow and help our bodies to function properly)

It is important to get enough water throughout the day because our bodies lose water during many different activities. Replacing lost water will help to keep you hydrated and help to keep all the important body functions listed above running smoothly.

Ask Class: How do you think our bodies lose water?

listen to response, create list together, recap and compare with the following

Water is lost through waste, sweating, and even breathing!

Sometimes you cannot physically see when your body is losing water. Because of this, it is important to continue to replace lost water throughout the day.

Section 2: Where Does My Water Come From?

The best and easiest way to get lots of water is by drinking it. It is recommended to **make water our drink of choice [1]**.

There are also many other ways for your body to get more water! You can get water from other healthy drink choices such as: lower-fat milk, plant-based milk, and 100% fruit juices, or you can also get water from eating food!

Almost all food has water in it, but water-rich foods have a larger amount of water. By eating foods which have higher levels of water, your body can absorb the water and use it to perform its daily functions. Most water-rich foods are foods in the **Fruits and Vegetables** food group. This group has higher amounts of water and can help you to meet your daily water needs.

Ask Class: Can you name some water-rich foods?

Answers: Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, melons, strawberries, oranges, peaches, soups, smoothies, etc.

Having a mixture of water and water-rich foods in your diet can make for an easy and healthy way to meet your daily water goals!

Section 3: How Much Water Do You Need?

The amount of water someone needs may be different depending on the person and the situation that they are in. When your body is low in water, there are signals that your body gives to tell you that you need to have more water. We call this need for water, *dehydration* (*dehydration* - issues with your body's functions when it does not have enough water).

Ask Class: How do our bodies tell us that we need to have more water? **listen to response, create list together, recap and compare with the following**

Answers: A combination of: thirst, dry lips, headaches, feeling tired or dizzy, and/or muscle cramps are all some of the signals from your body alerting you that you should have more water.

If you begin to have any of these symptoms, it is important to have more water.

But how much water do we want to have in a day? Your daily water goals for both drinks and food should be between:

- 1.2-1.9L/day or 5-8 cups/day for **males and females ages 4-8***

**Educators Note: It might be helpful to have an in-class demonstration to show how much water 5-8 cups is. Try filling up a bucket one cup at a time, 5-8 times, to show children what their water goals should be.*

However, this water range may change depending on different people and on what situation you are in.

Also, it is important to understand that having too much water can be harmful to our bodies. Try to stick to the ranges listed above and listen to the signals from your body to make sure that you are having the right amount of water!

Section 4: What Situations Require You to Consume More Water?

*Ask Class: In what situations do you think we would need to have more water? *listen to response, create list together, recap and compare with the following**

- *In a hot environment* - Higher temperatures can cause your body to sweat more and lose fluids faster.
- *During sickness* - Some fevers and illnesses can cause you to lose fluids.
- *During exercise* - Exercise also causes your body to lose fluids through excessive sweating.

Section 5: Sugar-Sweetened Beverages vs. Water

*Ask Class: Are there any other drinks you can think of which also have water? *listen to response, create list together, recap and compare with the following**

Answers: Pop, soda, sugar-sweetened fruit beverages, energy drinks, and coffee.

These drinks can have high amounts of the ingredients: salt, added sugars, and fat. It is best to limit these drinks and to try to choose healthier options, such as water, most of the time.

Summary: Wrap-up and Take-Home Points

Water is very important for our regular body functions and it can stop us from becoming dehydrated. Remember to drink lots of water throughout the day and to include some water-rich foods into your daily diet.

**Educators Note: For further facilitation, use the assigned quiz to recap the key concepts and test knowledge learned in this lesson.*

Adapted from:

[1] Canada. Health Canada. (2019). Make water your drink of choice. In *Canada's food guide*. Ottawa, Ontario: Health Canada.

[2] Institute of Medicine (U.S.). (2004). *Dietary reference intake: Water, potassium, sodium, chloride, and sulfate*. Washington, D.C: National Academies Press.

REFLECTION NOTES: