



## The Importance of Drinking Water



Soft drinks and sugar-sweetened fruit drinks have largely replaced more nutritious beverages such as water and low-fat milk in children's diets during the past two decades.<sup>1,2,3</sup> This switch to calorie-dense, nutrient-absent soft drinks has been linked to a rising rate of obesity in American children and teenagers.<sup>1-3</sup> In addition to the rising rate of obesity, dramatic decreases in calcium intake have been seen in many children due to the displacement of milk by soft drinks.<sup>2</sup>

The USDA recommends that children drink 2-3 cups of low-fat milk daily.<sup>4</sup> Many pediatricians and dietitians advise children to drink 1-2 cups of low-fat milk beyond this recommended amount as a nutritional safeguard. Once children's milk needs have been met, water is the beverage of choice.<sup>1-3,5</sup> Children from the age of 2-12 years should have about 4-8 cups of water per day.<sup>6</sup>

**The Healthy Kids Meal & Motion Markers™ system** is a fun way to get kids drinking more water instead of sweetened drinks. Children love to drink water so they can use the photo markers to track their progress on their daily chart. Drinking water is a great habit for children to bring with them into adulthood.

### References:

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3. Ritchie LD, Welk G, Styne D, Gerstein DE, Crawford PB. Family environment and pediatric overweight: what is a parent to do? *J Am Diet Assoc* 2005; 105:570-579.
4. US Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans; 2005.
5. Southern, M. Obesity prevention in children: physical activity and nutrition. *Nutrition* 2004; 20:704-708.
6. Larsen J. Fluid, hydration and water. *Ask the Dietitian*; 1995.