

Go for H₂O



The body needs water to live. Water helps control the body's temperature. It helps the body use nutrients found in food. It helps carry oxygen from the lungs, and food from the stomach to the rest of the body.

Lack of water can lead to dehydration. This occurs when you don't have enough water in your body to carry out normal functions. Even mild dehydration can make employees feel tired and not want to work. People working outdoors and in the heat need to take great care to stay hydrated. This tool will give employees tips and ideas on how to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Work with your Wellness Committee to decide whether or not your worksite would benefit from using this tool. Talk about which methods would work best for your site.
 2. Ensure that clean drinking water is easily accessible at work. Be sure to address remote worksites.
 3. Teach staff about why drinking water is important. Get their feedback about teaching techniques they think would be helpful.
 4. Talk to them about why the changes are being made and what management is doing to support the health of their workers.
 5. Evaluate your efforts often. Make changes as needed.
- Ask workers for ideas on how to promote Water Wednesdays.
 - Some examples of activities to promote Water Wednesdays:
 - Encourage employees to drink water instead of sugary drinks (e.g. soda, sports drinks, energy drinks).
 - Invite workers to pair up for the day to remind each other to drink water.
 - Ask workers to think of an activity they often do. This might be going on break or finishing a task. This can serve as a reminder to check their thirst.
 - Suggest that workers set a timer on their watch to remind them to take a drink of water.
 - Purchase or work with partners to secure donations of refillable water bottles.
 - Ask workers where they would like to have access to water.
 - Remind workers to treat every day like Water Wednesday. Choose water instead of sugary drinks all week long.

TOOL TIPS

Water Campaigns

- **WATER WEDNESDAYS.** Start a weekly program to encourage employees to drink water. Talk about different cues to help you remember to drink water while at work.
 - Create “Water Wednesday” posters. Or make a “healthy” bulletin board with new water promotion messages every week.

¹ Montain SJ, Latzka WA, 1999, Water and Electrolyte Requirements for Exercise [abstract]. *Clinics in Sports Medicine*, 1999; 18(3):513-524
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278591905701654>, accessed 2/27/2014.



Graphic Attribute: The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’s Choose Health LA initiative highlights healthier offerings in county cafeterias through signage and other promotional materials.

- **COME UP WITH A SLOGAN AND/OR LOGO.** Sponsor a contest to come up with a catchy slogan or logo that encourages workers to drink water. Talk to management about having the winning slogan or logo displayed on:
 - t-shirts or hats.
 - posters.
 - in newsletters.
 - water bottles.
 - cups and mugs in the kitchen.
 - on the front of vending machines.

- **INCLUDE “DRINK WATER” MESSAGE IN PRE-SHIFT MEETINGS.** Especially during the hot days of summer, include a reminder before each shift, about the importance of drinking water.
- **START A WATER CHALLENGE.** Hold a 5- to 10-week challenge to encourage workers to switch from sugary drinks to water. Look at the *Take Action!* guide, another tool in the *California Fit Business Kit*, for ideas. Give participants a log to track their progress. Provide rewards for participating. Water bottles or hydration packs make good prizes.
- **WRITE NEWS BULLETINS.** Include articles about the importance of hydration in employee newsletters, pay envelopes, emails, or any type of routine communications.
- **MAKE CONNECTIONS.** Do you have a fruit and veggie club? Work with them to provide in-season fruits and herbs to make flavored water. Try sliced cucumbers, lemons, or strawberries with mint or rosemary. Does your site take stretch breaks? Promote water to quench their thirst. Encourage employees to drink water and eat healthy snacks. Our bodies can get the sugar and salt they need naturally from the foods we eat, instead of a sports drink.

IN AGRICULTURE:

From harvest to water stations. Start a program that makes it easy for harvesters to get clean, cool water. Have water stations at all of the trucks and card check points. When harvesters deliver their containers, the crew supervisors and card check personnel will remind the crew to have a cup of water. Make sure restrooms are easily accessible.

Other Ways to Encourage Water Consumption at Work

- Provide water at the beginning and end of each day and during all breaks.
- Remind employees to drink water. Ring a bell or blow a whistle.
- Train all employees on the signs, symptoms, and dangers of heat-related illness. (Find resources at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteFitBusinessKit.aspx.)
- Keep an eye on the temperature. Be aware of heat waves. Provide more water reminders these days.
- Encourage employees to drink smaller amounts more often.
- Make restrooms easily accessible.
- Remind employees that there are no consequences for using the bathroom.
- Keep bathrooms clean and well maintained. Employees should not avoid drinking water to avoid using the bathrooms.
- Make water readily available to those working outdoors.
- Provide bottled water at vending machines for an equal or lower price than other drinks. If needed, raise the price on sugary beverages to offset costs.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING...

Never force yourself, or anyone else, to drink water. Do not host water drinking contests or competitions. Hyponatremia is a disorder of water balance and can be caused by forcing the body to drink too much water. Though rare, when this happens, water dilutes the blood sodium to a dangerous level.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eating snacks such as salted nuts and a banana can help supply the electrolytes you lose when you sweat.

GO FURTHER

- Decide which techniques are the most effective and include them in company wellness policies.
- Serve water at meetings and events instead of sugary drinks.
- Ask management to model water consumption.
- Adopt vending policies that provide a predominance of healthy beverage options at a price advantage (or go for 100% healthy).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit our website for great printable handouts, sample policies, and more information www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteProgram.aspx

California Department of Public Health's *Rethink Your Drink* Campaign
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RethinkYourDrink.aspx

rethink YOUR DRINK

The *Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Rethink Your Drink* Campaign is led by the California Department of Public Health.

The Campaign's primary goals are to:

- 1) educate low-income Californians about healthy drink options
- 2) help identify drinks with added sugar
- 3) make the link between consumption of sugary drinks and health risks

In this way, the Campaign hopes to shift consumption toward healthier, more affordable beverages like water. At the same time, the Campaign hopes to stimulate community-level partnerships and invite local environmental changes that will improve access, affordability and desirability of healthy beverages.



This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.

