

Good Water Intake is Vital to Reducing Continence Problems in Children

A recent article published in the British Medical Journal has stated there is no evidence to support claims that children and adults should drink 6-8 glasses of water a day. ERIC, the UK's only childhood continence charity, argues that good water intake is vital to overcoming and preventing childhood continence problems.

Bedwetting, daytime wetting and constipation can all be linked to insufficient fluid and there is good research that suggests adequate drinking is beneficial for bladder capacity and for bladder and bowel function. The NICE Guidelines for the management of childhood bedwetting state, "adequate daily fluid intake is important in the management of bedwetting" and the guidance provides recommended fluid intake depending on age. The NICE Guidelines on childhood constipation also have a section on recommended fluid intake.

Eileen Jacques, ERIC Information and Helpline Manager, said; "Parents and children need guidance about the importance of an adequate fluid intake. When visiting a health professional or calling the ERIC Helpline about a continence problem, one of the first questions will be "how much does the child drink?" If the answer is less than recommended for the child's age, one of the first steps will be to recommend gradually increasing this. For many children, increasing fluid intake will help with the management of a continence problem. For more information visit www.eric.org.uk."

ERIC is the UK's only organisation dedicated to providing information and support to children and families suffering with childhood continence problems. ERIC's confidential Helpline (0845 370 8008) is available Mon-Fri 10-4.

Notes

ERIC's Water is Cool in School campaign was launched in October 2000 in response to a call from health professionals who despaired over the lack of drinking water facilities and opportunities to drink in most schools. Continence advisors and school nurses felt there was little point trying to help children and young people with continence problems when they weren't able to drink adequately during the school day. Things have thankfully changed over the last years in many schools. But there are still pockets of bad practice and virtually no legislation on the provision of drinking water, unlike for adults in the workplace. www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk

British Medical Association, Hilary Forrester, wrote reviews of studies and research on drinking water and here is a link to her summary on children <http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/resources/wise-up---children-web.pdf>
<http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/medical-facts>