

Benefits Spotlight

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More Americans Are Choosing Water—And for Good Reason

We've all seen the startling statistics about sugary beverages:

- An 8-ounce energy drink contains 7 teaspoons of sugar.
- A 20-ounce sports drink has 8 teaspoons of sugar.
- A 20-ounce soda packs 19 teaspoons of sugar.

The sugar in drinks is substantial, and it has a real impact on your dental—and overall—health. Fortunately, Americans are doing something about it: Soda consumption sunk to a 31-year low in 2016, and Americans are now drinking more water than soda.

Ready to slow your sugary swigging in favor of more H₂O? Here's some encouragement to help you make the switch.

Tapping Water's Benefits for Total Health

Why is water so great? Water aids virtually every bodily function—from temperature and digestion to joint health and energy levels.

It also contains zero calories and zero sugar. The reason dentists encourage patients to curb sugar consumption is because sugar produces acid buildup in the mouth, which erodes tooth enamel—this creates an optimal environment for cavities to form.

And while more Americans are reaching for bottled water, simple tap water is just as good for you. In fact, tap water contains some extra dental health perks.

- **Tap water is fluoridated**, which protects tooth enamel and makes it more resistant to decay.
- **Tap water saves you money** because it is cheaper than drinking bottled water. Plus, the extra fluoride protection in tap water could actually cut your dental bill by protecting your family from cavities.

How Delta Dental's Helping Iowa Students Hydrate the Healthy Way

Getting kids to choose water over sugary beverages such as soda and sports drinks is a challenge—and the lack of healthy hydration in children poses its own set of risks. For example, more than 50 percent of American children and teens don't stay properly hydrated during school, which lowers cognitive function and zaps energy levels.

The earlier you adopt healthy hydration habits, the better. The Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation is doing its part by putting water within easy reach of Iowa students with the ***Rethink Your Drink*** campaign.

Established in 2017 with funding from the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, the ***Rethink Your Drink*** campaign aims to boost tap water consumption in Iowa's schools by:

1. Replacing old drinking fountains with new water bottle filling stations.
2. Providing students and staff with reusable water bottles.
3. Sharing education on the benefits of hydrating throughout the day with water instead of sugary drinks.

Staying Hydrated in 2018 and Beyond

Toting a water bottle while at work or on the go is one of the easiest ways to make a habit out of healthy hydration. But if you need to shake up your water routine, you have options. With water being more popular than ever, different varieties of "value-added" water are hitting store shelves (just make sure to read the label to ensure they don't contain sneaky sugars). Exploring different flavored waters or sparkling waters will help the switch from soda stick and keep the health benefits flowing.

Sources

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5 Toothbrushing Tips for Toddlers

From rubbing infant gums with a damp towel to establishing a solid brush-and-floss routine as an adult, dental hygiene is important no matter your age. But practicing good dental habits is tough during the toddler years.

Squirmy little ones who don't understand the importance of dental care require a bit of fun infused into their toothbrushing time. The five tips below might just do the trick.

Established in 2017 with funding from the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, the Rethink Your Drink campaign aims to boost tap water consumption in Iowa's schools by:



1. **Make it a family affair.** Help your toddler understand that toothbrushing is important to the whole family. Bringing everyone into the bathroom to brush together creates an inclusive atmosphere—and playing music will add some fun to the party!
2. **Time it right with technology.** Dentists recommend everyone—including toddlers—brush twice daily for two minutes each time. To help toddlers understand how long to brush, buy a toothbrush that plays a sound or lights up at the two-minute mark. You can also download Delta Dental's free mobile app, which includes a toothbrush timer.
3. **Not the techie type?** Sand timers are another great way to help your toddler visualize the two-minute toothbrushing target—and they are excellent at captivating young minds. Purchase a sand timer that contains two minutes of sand, so your little one knows the right amount of time to brush.
4. **Play pretend to inspire a healthy reality.** Find an old toothbrush and let your child brush a favorite doll's teeth. Or, for a more real-world application, let your toddler practice on you with your toothbrush.
5. **Celebrate success!** Use a sticker chart to showcase a successful brushing session. The positive reinforcement inspires toddlers to keep brushing, and a board speckled with stickers will make them proud of how well they're doing.

If these tips aren't soothing your twice-daily toothbrushing tantrums, talk to your dentist. He or she can recommend ways to help your toddler brush better.