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Drink more water when the heat is on

As the summer temperatures begin to soar, so too should your water intake, South Western Sydney Local Health District experts are warning.

“Up to 70 per cent of the human body is made up of water, which is easily lost by sweating, urinating or even breathing,” Acting Director Health Promotion Mandy Williams said.

“When the weather is really hot, you lose water even faster.

“Everyone needs to understand that every cell, tissue and organ in their body needs water to function correctly and dehydration is the direct result of not having enough water in their system.

“The best way to prevent dehydration is to drink water before you actually feel thirsty – and plenty of it. By the time you feel thirsty your body is already dehydrated.

Ms Williams said tap water - clear, safe, simple and free – keeps people better hydrated than any of the ‘boosted’ sports, fruit or soft drinks on offer. The fluoride in tap water also helps to keep our teeth healthy.

“Sports drinks are only recommended for elite athletes who lose electrolytes after a vigorous workout,” Ms Williams said.

“There can be anywhere from 500 - 1000 kilojoules in each sports drink, which is almost a whole meal’s worth of kilojoules, far too many calories for general consumption, especially for anyone who is struggling with their weight,” she said.

“It’s especially important for children to drink tap water instead of soft drinks or fruit juices because of their high sugar content which cause tooth decay.

“Babies from six to twelve months should be given cooled, boiled tap water. Babies under six months do not usually need extra fluids beyond breastmilk or infant formula, however in hot weather babies may feed more frequently,” she said.

Ms Williams said some signs of dehydration included:

- Dizziness
- Tiredness
- Intense thirst
- Bright or dark yellow urine
- Loss of appetite
- Fainting
- Heat cramps (muscle pains or spasms)
- Nausea or vomiting

If symptoms are severe, seek urgent medical advice and call an ambulance if necessary.