Drink water and your kids will, too

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It's hot, it's muggy and, of course, your kids are running around outside like madmen during their summer break.

That's why York County doctors are encouraging parents to make sure their children and family members are drinking enough water.

"Dehydration is more often seen in pediatrics," said Dr. Shawn Cooper, a pediatrician with WellSpan Springdale Pediatrics. "The smaller you are, the harder it is for your body to deal with heat and dehydration."

**Symptoms:** Symptoms of dehydration include a dry or sticky mouth; decreased urine output, such as going three hours without a wet diaper for an infant; headache and dizziness or lightheadedness, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Once you see the signs and symptoms of dehydration, Cooper said, you're already behind on combating it. However, knowing the symptoms is key for getting back on track, he said.

"You can tell a lot from behavior," Cooper said. "Kids can get flushed. They can quickly go from being very active to sitting and being cranky."

As it gets more humid, it's harder for the body to sweat, he added. This can be pronounced in children because their bodies haven't fully developed the ability to sweat efficiently.

**How much:** Generally, kids need a couple of quarts of water each day, Cooper said. Teens may need up to a gallon of water if they're active in summer sports.

Hydration doesn't necessarily have to come from water. Fruit such as watermelon and treats such as ice pops can give kids the liquids their bodies need.

"Liquid is liquid," Cooper said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has lots of tips for keeping kids and families hydrated during the warm summer months. Carrying a water bottle gives easy access to water when you're running around.

Choosing water over sugary beverages such as soda or sports drinks can help with calorie intake and can encourage good habits in children. Adding a wedge of lime or lemon to the water can improve the taste, too.

Parents set the primary example for their kids, Cooper added, so if you're choosing to drink water through the day, your kids probably will, too.

Cooper said if parents have any questions at all about whether their child is getting enough water or fluids, they should not be afraid to ask their health care provider.

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