

Improving Water Consumption

How to offer water as a drink every day at snack/meals

Use the following questions and the corresponding “Action Steps” to identify new ways to overcome water consumption challenges. The **ALL** symbols are tips and suggestions for everyone, no matter how you answer the question. Items in bolded caps with the word “**SEE**” in front refer to OSNAP resources to help you meet your goals.

Questions

Action Steps

Do you have an available source of tap water (fit for drinking)?

- NO** → Buy a large cooler and cups to make water available at snacks and meals. Make sure a staff member, custodian, or food service worker is tasked the duty of keeping the cooler full and clean everyday.
- YES** → Keep a full pitcher of water and cups available where children eat. **SEE: WATER SANITATION GUIDE**
- ALL** → Take a cooler or jug with you when you go to a park or playground.
- ALL** → Allow kids to carry their own refillable water bottles that they can drink from.
- ALL** → If you’re not sure whether your water is safe, have it tested or check out the EPA’s drinking water reports for your area. <http://water.epa.gov/drink/local/>
- ALL** → Try serving pitchers with ice cold water and fruit slices, mint sprigs or a splash of 100% fruit juice to make the water extra refreshing. **SEE: FOOD & FUN UNIT 10**

Are drinking fountains available to children throughout the day?

- NO** → Keep a full pitcher of water and cups available at child level throughout the day. **SEE: WATER SANITATION GUIDE**
- NO** → Buy a large cooler to make water readily available at snacks and meals. Make sure a staff member, custodian, or food service worker is tasked the duty of keeping the cooler full and clean everyday.
- YES** → Make sure staff encourage kids to use the drinking fountain—especially during physical activity.
- YES** → Allow kids to bring refillable water bottles or provide cups so they can use the water fountain to fill up and have water at snacks and meals.

Does your program spend money to purchase beverages?

- NO** → If you don’t purchase beverages, serve tap water every day. **SEE: SAMPLE MENUS**
- YES** → See whether there is flexibility about what’s ordered. Stop buying beverages like juice, and use the money saved to purchase healthier foods like fresh fruit. Serve tap water every day. **SEE: SNACK SENSE, SAMPLE MENUS**
- ALL** → Add water to your daily menu. **SEE: SAMPLE MENUS**

Does another organization (like School Food Service or a food bank) provide your program with beverages?

- NO** → Serve tap water every day. **SEE: SAMPLE MENUS**
- YES** → Talk with the person in charge of ordering beverages to see if there is flexibility. Ask whether they can stop buying beverages like juice, and use the money saved to purchase healthier foods like fresh fruit. Serve water every day. **SEE: WORKING WITH SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE**
- ALL** → Add water to your daily menu. **SEE: SAMPLE MENUS**

Do you have a policy about serving water during snack/meals?

- NO** → Create a policy stating your program will provide water as a beverage during all snacks/meals. Communicate this policy to staff and families, and put the policy in appropriate places, like family and staff handbooks. **SEE: POLICY WRITING GUIDE, SAMPLE LETTERS**
- YES** → Make sure that you communicate your policy to families. **SEE: SAMPLE LETTERS**