

Reusable Water Bottles....Fill'em Up but Keep'em Clean

As the weather heats up, so does our need to stay hydrated. Experts suggest drinking at least eight 8-ounces glasses of water per day, and more if you're exercising. The reason is that liquids consumed are vital for keeping all bodily systems functioning properly including our brain which is 85% water. One of the least expensive, easiest and more environmentally responsible ways to get all that water is by using a refillable water bottle.

Reusable water bottles come in metal, glass, and safe plastic, not to mention a variety of shapes, sizes and designs. But the one thing all water bottles have in common is that you need to keep them clean. Bacteria can build up in water bottles if they are left full, especially if you are using them for beverages other than water, and can actually make you sick if the bottles are not kept clean. Here are some key points to good, clean (healthy) drinking!

***Wash and disinfect your water bottle at least every few days, if not more often. It's simple—just add a few drops of dish soap to your water bottle, fill about half full with warm water, screw on the top and shake! Rinse the bottle thoroughly and leave open to air dry.**

***If your bottle is in need of deeper cleaning (think—to remove an odor?) after you wash with soap and water, use a vinegar soak of 1/5 white vinegar and 4/5 water. Let it sit in the bottle overnight, then rinse thoroughly with water in the morning.**

***Disposable plastic water bottles aren't designed to be used more than once. Continuously reusing and washing disposable water bottles may begin to break down the plastic exposing the user to harmful chemicals which can pose a health risk. So, use disposable plastic bottles as they are intended and remember to protect our environment by recycling them after use.**

For more information about this topic and others, contact the Meadowlark Extension District offices at: Seneca Office— (785) 336-2184; Holton Office— (785) 364-4125; or Oskaloosa Office— (785) 863-2212. Meadowlark Extension District is on the Web at <http://www.meadowlark.ksu.edu>.