

## Water bottle hygiene

Water is listed as the recommended drink for all ages and has many important functions in the body, like helping us digest food, stay hydrated and maintain body temperature. Drinking water is also shown to help children maintain concentration across the day.

Teaching children to quench their thirst with water sets up healthy habits from an early age, so it's a good idea to encourage your kids to pack a refillable water bottle for school every day.

Water bottles don't need to be fancy or expensive, and only require a little upkeep. Keep your refillable bottles and water sparkling clean by following a few simple steps.

### Fresh is best

Remember NOT to top up water bottles from the day before. Tip any excess water out onto the garden, fill up the bird bath or give the indoor plants a drink. Once washed, refill with fresh water and off you go.

### Wash with soap

Because our tap water is treated with a little bit of chlorine, a quick wash each night with the dishes should keep your water bottle clean and free of any bacteria that might upset tummies.

Once a week water bottles need a more thorough clean in soapy water, paying special attention to the lid. This is where food particles and dirt from little hands can become trapped. A water bottle that doesn't require any handling of the lid to take a sip is easier to keep clean and the most hygienic option.

### Air dry is best

To disinfect water bottles, after washing in soapy water leave the bottle and lid to completely air dry. Bacteria like to live where there is moisture so drying out the bottle will help kill the bugs. Leaving a water bottle upside down on the dish rack overnight is an easy way to achieve this.

### Vinegar works a treat

If you are still concerned, or a water bottle has developed a slight smell, then a light vinegar rinse is also a very effective way of killing any bugs. Fill the bottle with one cup of vinegar and the rest water. Let it sit for a couple of hours, then rinse and wash as normal.

### Freeze the bottle

In the summer months you can also freeze  $\frac{3}{4}$  full plastic water bottles overnight. This not only kills most bugs that might be living in the bottle, it also provides refreshing chilled water with every sip across those hot summer days.

