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Extension Spotlight: Beat the summer heat with flavored water

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Adding berries and mint leaves to an ice cube tray before popping it in the freezer can add flavor to otherwise plain water.

Photo courtesy of Foodhero.org

Soon, we will be in the heat of summer, which we are all probably looking forward to. When summer's heat is upon us, remember to drink more water and eat more foods that are full of water. Water is an important part of our bodies; it makes up roughly 60 percent of our body, so we need to stay fully hydrated to have our bodies working well.

There are many reasons to drink water, like weight loss, hydrated skin, it helps with constipation, maximizes muscle performance and can reduce headaches. Hopefully, this list helps getting you excited about drinking water this summer.

Dehydration is when your body doesn't get as much water as it needs to function properly. Dehydration occurs more during warmer months because water loss happens when you sweat to help cool you off. When you drink enough water, your body can work as it should so that you experience all of the benefits listed earlier.

Water is a great way to stay hydrated because it's free. However, I have heard from many people they just don't like water, or they forget to drink it. To drink enough water this summer, try mixing up different flavors and temperatures to find one that suits your tastes because you will drink more if you enjoy it.

Try ice water, tap water, berry ice cubes, a touch of juice added to your water for flavor or herbs and vegetables. Keep playing with combinations until you find one that you like. Try these flavors, or make up your own!

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Flavored Water Options

For 1 quart (4 cups) of water, try one of these flavor options:

Cucumber

- ½ cucumber

- Cut into thin slices; leave the skin on for color.

Citrus

- Lemon, lime, orange or grapefruit; ½ small fruit or ¼ grapefruit
- Leave the skin on; slice thinly in whole circles or quarter wedges.

Herbs

- Mint, basil or rosemary
- 10 small leaves or a small sprig
- Tear or crush the leaves.

Apple/Cinnamon

- ½ cinnamon stick and ½ apple
- Leave the skin on for color; core can be left or removed.
- Slice into thin slices or circles.

Strawberry/Kiwi

- 3 to 4 strawberries and ½ kiwi
- Peel the kiwi; slice both fruits into thin slices.

1. Slice, tear, or mash the fruit to release the most flavor.
2. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight to allow the most flavoring.
3. Use within 2 days for best quality.

Look for a reusable water cup that suits your drinking needs. If you like ice water, look for an insulated cup to keep your water cold all day or, if you like infused water, look for a cup with an infuser. Make sure your cup is large enough, you don't run out of water during the day, but not so large, it's hard to carry around.

Fruit Cooler**Fruit Cooler**

3 cups fruit blended, possible options are strawberries or watermelon
3 cups 100% juice or could substitute carbonated water
1 Tablespoon lime juice

Drink lots of water and water-filled foods this summer, and stay well-hydrated during the heat to enjoy all the benefits of water.