



## The first handbook on hydration and children is introduced

**GfK study, Italian parents are not attentive to their children's hydration:**

**Only 1 in 2 ask their children if they have drunk during the day**

**1 in 3 is not aware of the body's hydration requirements**

**4 in 5 say that their children only drink when they are thirsty, or rather when the dehydration process has already begun**

*GfK survey: gap between what parents consider proper hydration and what they think their children's water consumption is, and what they actually know and do*

*SIPPS, FEMTEC, and the Sanpellegrino Group are in Rome today to address a topic that is highly relevant to children's health and well-being.*

*The first handbook on hydration and children is introduced, dedicated to parents and paediatricians.*

*The Hydration@school project has kicked off, aimed at raising awareness among students, teachers, and parents regarding the importance of proper hydration.*

Rome, 22 November 2016 – When talking about proper hydration, Italian parents seem to be little aware of their children's behaviour. This according to a **GfK survey** presented today in Rome as part of the **"Bere bene per crescere bene"** [Drink well to grow well] **Convention promoted by FEMTEC** (World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy) and **SIPPS** (Italian Association for Preventive and Social Paediatric Medicine) in collaboration with the **Sanpellegrino Group**.

From the results, the presence emerged of a **gap between what parents think about proper hydration and what is actually happening**: there is little attention paid to the subject, despite it being of primary importance to children's health. It is presumed that children drink adequately **without requiring specific attention**, unlike their diet, which is more greatly monitored. In fact, on the one hand, 1 parent in of 2 (51%) considers adequate hydration to be among the main levers for the health of his/her children, together with proper amount of sleep (59%) and physical activity (50%), while on the other, with regard to daily routines, **monitoring fluid intake is secondary: children are asked what they did during the day (77%), what and how much they ate (70%), while only 1 out of 2 (54%) parents ask if they have drunk water.**

### The SIPPS paediatricians' handbook

**"Water is a truly essential nutrient."**<sup>(1)</sup> This is the first and fundamental point in the **handbook on hydration and children that was drafted by SIPPS** for the convention. *"Our objective,"* explains **Dr. Giuseppe Di Mauro**, family paediatrician and President of SIPPS, *"Is to provide paediatricians and parents with a practical and easy-to-use reference tool. This is the first time a*



*document of this kind has been developed. We hope that parents and the academic world receive the important message which is at the foundation of this initiative: that proper hydration is fundamental to the healthy growth and development of children. Likewise, inadequate hydration is associated with a deterioration in mental, physical, and emotional health.<sup>(1)</sup>*

The handbook also stresses another aspect that parents must keep in mind: that **insufficient water consumption is associated with higher body mass index and a greater risk of obesity<sup>(2)</sup>**. The rule of drinking **at least 8 glasses of water per day** is true for children (7-10 years old) as well, with reference to a **glass “their size”** (150 ml).

This knowledge, however, does not seem to be adequately widespread. Parents have **little awareness of what the proper daily amount of water is**: approximately 20% think that a child's water needs are less than one litre per day and 15% do not know what a child's water needs are. Furthermore, **58% of children drinks less than one litre of water per day** and **only 37% of parents thinks that the feeling of thirst is a sign of dehydration**, which should be prevented. **81% states that their children only drink when thirsty, hence the dehydration process is therefore already starting.**

*“The results of this study,” says **Prof. Umberto Solimene** from the University of Milan, a member of the Sanpellegrino Observatory and President of FEMTEC, “make us reflect on the need to bridge the gap in information and awareness not only on the part of parents, but of the population in general. A year after EXPO (the occasion in which we presented the International Consensus entitled ‘Water&Health, how water protects and improves health in all its various aspects’), with today’s convention we would like to emphasize once more that proper hydration can contribute to the prevention of numerous pathologies and guarantee proper childhood development. This is why the focus of today’s convention is specifically children – a ‘fragile’ category from various points of view – but also, consequently, parents and the academic world.”*

**“Learning good habits from a young age”** so as to be healthy adults tomorrow, is an objective that ties together the work and commitment of **partners from various fields**, who have made their work and skills available to this initiative.

*“We strongly believe in the importance of proper hydration. That’s why we’ve decided to promote this convention, which includes the participation of important scientists who have the health of children and their parents at heart,” stated **Stefano Agostini**, President and CEO of the Sanpellegrino Group. “Here at Sanpellegrino we have been committed for years to developing projects which encourage the creation of a hydration culture. Of these, one that we are particularly proud of is Hydration@school, an educational program dedicated to elementary school children that aims to raise awareness about the importance of proper hydration. The enormous interest that this project has attracted and attracts among teachers and students is further confirmation that we’ve taken the right path. Today is an opportunity for us to express our utmost satisfaction in having achieved solid results thanks to the collaboration and commitment of various professionals and partners of high added value.”*

**The Hydration@School project**



The Hydration@school project is an **educational campaign**, the objective of which is to raise awareness among students, teachers, and families regarding the importance of proper hydration for one's physical and mental well-being. The project's website ([www.hydrationschool.it](http://www.hydrationschool.it)) is the "container" from which one can download and print a series of free teaching materials on the topic to use in class, like, for example, water balance and the relationship between water and our bodies. From 2014 to the present **37,000 teachers have learned of the initiative and over 5,800 classes and almost 130,000 students have participated.**

#### References

- (1) Popkin BM., D'Anci KE, Rosenberg IH. Water, Hydration and Health. *Nutr Rev.* 2010; 68(8): 439–458.
- (2) Commission Directive 2003/40/EC. Official Journal of the European Union. Law 126/34 published on 22/5/2003.

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