

## Water, Water, Everywhere

When did drinking water become so important? I was at a little league game the other day which lasted about an hour and half and the game was stopped twice so the kids could take a water break. It was a cool spring day, about sixty degrees and overcast. There was no threat of heat exhaustion and yet it seemed critically important that the kids stay hydrated.

When the water break was announced the parents pulled out all kinds of water containers from plastic jugs with frozen sleeves to keep the water cold to bottles quart size bottles of spring water pulled from the warehouse of supplies kept in the garage. Some kids had sports drinks. These kids were from families that realized hydration is nothing if you're short on electrolytes.

I'm not sure how the need to have liquid with you at all times is a response to breakthroughs in scientific research so much as an extension of our need for oral gratification. Let's face it smoking is out, even if you have a tobacco Jones it's becoming déclassé to flaunt it. Holding a water bottle says you care about your health (hell even if it's filled with vodka, you still get the credit) and you understand the importance of hydration. It also seems to say you are too good for regular water. And just like smoking used to indicate a certain kind of "coolness" holding a water bottle says you have enough time in your day to think about how much water you are drinking.

This is a huge change in our culture since the days when I was a kid and taking a water break during a little league game meant standing in line to drink from the hose or being so thirsty you didn't mind the rusty taste of the water from the fountain in the park. Water was what you had when Mom was out of Milk or lemonade. It came from the faucet, hose or sometimes when we went camping a big plastic jug. Just like my mother didn't worry about where we were when we went out to play, she didn't implore us to take a Gatorade with us when we said we were going hiking in the woods.

For the most part I don't look back on my childhood and wonder if it could have been happier had I been better hydrated. Would that humiliating strike out in girls softball have happened if I had had a long cold sip of PowerAde? One wonders.

When drinking bottled water came into vogue I was still living paycheck to paycheck and could not afford, nor did I have room for, the case of pint size spring water bottles that are de rigueur. So I bought a couple bottles and refilled them with tap water. I had my water bottle with me when I went on hikes or took a long drive with friends. I made the effort to look like I cared about my health but deep down I wondered if I was any better than the woman in word processing who carried around her vodka in a Poland Spring water bottle.

Just like they told us as kids that smoking could lead to harder drugs, I worry that drinking water will lead to harder liquids. If that's true we may have to install wet bars on little league fields for the next generation.