

JUST Add Water!

Sugary Drinks & Water - Fact Sheet

What is a sugary drink?

A sugary drink is a drink that is high in added sugar and calories and low in nutrients. Examples of sugary drinks include: sodas, fruit juice drinks (not 100% fruit juice), sports drinks, sugar-sweetened teas and coffees, sugar-sweetened waters and energy drinks.

Sugar has many names.

Sugar has many names. To find out if a drink has added sugar, look for any of these words in the ingredients: sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, glucose, honey, invert sugar, molasses, nectars, sucrose, syrup or cane sugar.

How much sugar is in sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks contain lots of added sugar. Just one soda or juice drink can have as much sugar as two candy bars (on average, based on a 20 fl oz portion size). Nutrition labels tell you how much sugar is in each serving, but many drinks have more than one serving. To find out how much sugar is in one container multiply the amount of sugar per serving by the number of servings. For example, if a 20 fl oz bottle of soda has 2.5 servings with 26 grams of sugar per serving, that equals 65 grams of sugar in that one bottle.

How much sugar is acceptable a day for kids?

For a healthy diet, added sugar isn't necessary at all. In fact, the USDA and USHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 say to reduce foods and drinks high in added sugars. "Sugar-sweetened beverages provide excess calories and few essential nutrients to the diet and should only be consumed when nutrient needs have been met and without exceeding daily calorie limits."¹ The best way to determine how much added sugar is acceptable for your child's diet is to talk with their doctor or a registered dietitian. A doctor or registered dietitian can help you determine how many calories your child should be getting a day and how much added sugar is acceptable.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary guidelines for Americans (7th ed.)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/publications/dietaryguidelines/2010/policydoc/policydoc.pdf>

How do sugary drinks increase my child's risks for tooth decay?

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), sugar affects teeth when it mixes with plaque (a sticky film of bacteria).¹ When sugar touches plaque it produces acid which then "attacks the teeth for 20 minutes or more" which can lead to tooth decay.¹ ADA says "...when teeth come in frequent contact with soft drinks and other sugar-containing substances, the risk of (tooth) decay formation is increased."² ADA recommends we be "mindful of the effects of frequent consumption of sugary beverages and non-nutritious snack foods."¹

For more information, visit the American Dental Association's Web site: www.ada.org

¹ American Dental Association. (2002). Diet and tooth decay. *Journal of the American Dental Association*, Vol. 133. Retrieved from http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient_13.pdf

² American Dental Association. (n.d.). *Diet and oral health: Patient version*. Retrieved from <http://www.ada.org/2984.aspx>



How do sugary drinks increase my child's risks for obesity?

Helping your child have a healthy weight and building healthy habits is essential for their future. Overweight teens have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.¹ A child's likelihood of becoming obese increases by 60 percent with each additional can or glass of sugary drinks they drink a day.² Sugary drinks can lead to weight gain and obesity because they add calories to a child's diet. Those extra calories are added on top of the calories in the foods they eat. Just like adults, kids gain weight when they take in more calories than they use each day.

¹ Office of the Surgeon General. (2007). *The Surgeon General's call to action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity: Overweight children and adolescents*. Last revised: January 11, 2007. Retrieved from http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm

² Ludwig, DS., Peterson, KE., Gortmaker, SL. (2001). Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity: A prospective, observational analysis. *Lancet*, 357(9255): 505-508.

How do sugary drinks increase my child's risks for diabetes?

Sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugars in the American diet.¹ The reason sugary drinks increase the risk of type 2 diabetes is because they contribute to weight gain, which can lead to obesity (an established risk factor for type 2 diabetes). One study found that participants who consumed large amounts of sugary drinks had a 26 percent higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes than those who consumed far fewer sugary drinks.²

¹ Welsh, J.A., Sharma, A.J., Grellinger, L., Vos, M.B. (2011). Consumption of added sugars is decreasing in the United States. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Vol. 94, No. 3, pp. 726-734.

² Malik et al. (2010). Sugar-sweetened beverages and risk of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes: A meta-analysis. *Diabetes Care*, 33(11): 2477-83. Epub 2010, Aug. 6. Review.

What about 100% fruit juice?

Unlike sugary drinks, 100% fruit juices do have nutritional value. Many parents see them as a way to get their kids to eat fruit, but they are high in natural sugar. It's best to replace fruit juice with real fruit. Real fruit has fiber that is filling and missing from fruit juice. When serving 100% fruit juice: 1) Keep the portions small; 2) Take a look at the amount of sugar and calories they are getting; and 3) Instead of sugary drinks serve them water the rest of the day.

Are sports drinks good for active kids?

Sports drinks are sugary drinks. In most cases, water is the best choice for hydration. The American College of Sports Medicine found that there was no difference between consuming water and sports drinks during exercise lasting less than one hour.¹ So, unless your child is at sports camp or competing in the summer heat, water is probably the best choice to keep them hydrated. Talk with your child's doctor or a registered dietitian if you have concerns. Carefully consider the amount of sugar in sports drinks before adding them to your child's diet. Keep cool water readily available for active kids at home and during activities.

¹ Convertino, V.A., Armstrong, L.E., Coyle, E.F., Mack, G. W., Sawka, M.N., Senay, L.C., Sherman, W.M. (1996). American College of Sports Medicine position stand on exercise and fluid replacement. *Med. Sci. Sports Exerc.*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. i-vii. Retrieved from <http://www.khsaa.org/sportsmedicine/heat/exerciseandfluidreplacement.pdf>

What about energy drinks?

Most energy drinks have very high amounts of sugar and caffeine. Parents should carefully read the labels of these products and talk to a doctor or registered dietitian before giving energy drinks to their children.

