

Choosing drinks for children...



Do you know?

- Children who regularly drink soft drink and other sweetened drinks are more likely to be overweight.
- In NSW, 55% of year 6 boys and just under 40% of year 6 girls drink more than one cup of soft drink each day. By year 8, these figures rise to almost 60% of boys and more than 40% of girls.

Water

Drinking water is the best way to quench thirst without getting the sugar and kilojoules found in fruit drinks and juices, soft drinks, sports drinks and flavoured mineral waters. Drinking water instead of sweetened drinks helps prevent dental problems and the Fluoride found in tap water also helps children develop strong teeth and bones.

Milk

Milk is a good source of Calcium and is important for the growth of strong bones and teeth.

- Reduced fat or lite milks should be encouraged for children over the age of two years. Reduced fat milks contain much the same nutrients as full-cream milks except they are lower in saturated fats and therefore in energy content.
- Children under two years of age should not drink reduced fat milks as they have higher energy requirements than older children.

Fruit juice

Fruit juice is often regarded as a healthy choice as it contains Vitamin C. However one small glass (125 ml) of most juices provides a child's daily requirement for Vitamin C. More than this provides excess sugar and kilojoules that can contribute to weight gain. A piece of fruit is a better choice than juice as it provides fibre.

soft drinks, cordials and sports drinks

Regular soft drinks, cordials, sports drinks and flavoured mineral waters can contain large amounts of sugar and kilojoules. These drinks are not a necessary part of a healthy diet and should only be consumed occasionally – not everyday.

(adapted from Q4 Live Outside the Box 2005 Teacher Resource)

Ideas to encourage your child to drink more water

- Pack a water bottle whenever you go out.
- In summer, put a frozen water bottle in your child's lunch box.
- Have cold water available at all times at home instead of sweetened drinks.
- When participating in sports, encourage your child to drink water rather than sports/energy drinks.
- Gradually water down juices, sports/energy drinks and cordials until your child is happy to replace these with plain water.
- Use smaller glasses when serving sugary drinks for children and limit the number and serve size of sugary drinks they have.

Remember

- If you always offer sweetened drinks, children will be less likely to choose plain water.
- If you are going to offer your children sweetened drinks on occasions, healthier options are those drinks and waters with just a hint of sweetness. These can be consumed in larger volumes (up to 500 ml) to satisfy thirst without giving children excess sugar or a preference for strongly sweetened drinks.

for more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au