

# Beverages Can Impact Children's Health



- Excess sugar in young children's diets causes about 28% of baby teeth cavities in children ages 2 to 5.
- Research shows that sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among children leads to excess caloric intake and weight gain and increased rates of childhood obesity.
- Each additional 12-ounce soft drink consumed per day by children increases their odds of becoming obese by 60%.



Sugar-sweetened beverages include sodas, fruit drinks or nectars, sports drinks, carbonated beverages, teas, and other beverages that contain sugar or other added caloric sweeteners. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children from birth to age five drink water or milk and limit their consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Following are current recommendations for age-appropriate beverages for children birth to age five.

Beverage	Age	Organization	Recommendation
Breast milk	0-12 mo+	American Academy of Pediatrics	Exclusive breastfeeding for a minimum of 4 months but preferably for 6 months  Breastfeeding should be continued, with the addition of complementary foods, at least through the first 12 months of age and as long as mutually desired by mother and infant
Milk	1-2 years	American Academy of Pediatrics	Whole milk  Reduced-fat milk for children between 12 months and 2 years of age for whom overweight or obesity is a concern or who have a family history of obesity, high cholesterol or heart disease
Milk	2 years+	American Academy of Pediatrics	Low-fat milk
Sugar-sweetened beverages	2 years+	American Academy of Pediatrics	Avoid carbonated beverages and sweetened beverages, including juices and sports drinks, that contain added sugar or high-fructose corn syrup
Juice, 100% only	6 mo - 6 years	San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative	Juice should not be introduced prior to 1 year of age  Juice is a poor nutritional choice; whole fruits are an excellent alternative  If juice is served to children over age 1, only 100% juice should be served only at meal or snack time and should be limited to 4 ounces per day  Children should not drink juice continually throughout the day  Juice should not be given at bedtime  Water should be offered if children are thirsty between meals



Check out healthy eating policies included in the *Early Childhood Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care*. For a copy, visit the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative website at [www.OurCommunityOurKids.org](http://www.OurCommunityOurKids.org), click Resources, Policy Clearinghouse, and Early Childhood.

