SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES

Sugar sweetened beverages are drinks that contain sugar and other sweeteners that provide your child’s body with “empty calories,” not with the nutrients necessary to grow. This is of particular concern when sugar sweetened beverages take the place of more nutritious beverages in the diet. For example, when soda takes the place of low-fat milk it displaces an important source of calcium and Vitamin D that your child needs. An additional concern is the increased risk of dental cavities from the added sugar and sweeteners these beverages contain.

Childhood is a time when many lifelong habits are developed, thus we want to be teaching children to reach for water, low fat milk, and other beverages low in sugar as their beverages of choice.

How to calculate the number of teaspoons of sugar in one serving of an item:

On the food label, locate the number of grams of sugar. Divide the number of grams of sugar by 4 to determine the number of teaspoons of sugar in one serving.

### Sugar Content of Common Drinks – per 1 cup serving (8 fl oz):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Grams of Sugar</th>
<th>Teaspoons of Sugar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% Orange Juice</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Juice</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.5 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grape Juice</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatorade</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kool-Aid</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.25 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemonade</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Tea</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.8 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca-Cola</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.5 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Cherry Slush</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12.25 tsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TIPS FOR REDUCING SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES:

- Make water the “Go To” choice!
- Get a water bottle for your child to carry around.
- Consider trying infused waters for added natural flavoring.
- Infused waters are made by mixing a variety of fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs for unique flavor combinations such as cucumber mint, blueberry lavender, and cherry lime.
  - Flavored waters without added sugar are other options for a flavor twist.
- Other than water, provide your child with low-fat or fat free milk and 100% fruit juice.
- Recommendations for juice and milk:
  - Milk: 2 cups per day for children ages 1-8
  - 100% fruit Juice: 4-6 oz per day for children ages 1-6
  - When buying juice make sure the label says 100% juice
- Tip – if your child currently drinks a lot of juice, consider diluting the juice to 50% water and 50% fruit juice. You can also mix ¼ cup juice with sparkling water for a fruity drink that is lower in sugar.

### BE AN INFORMED CONSUMER:

- Read the food label and look for potential sources of added sugar in the beverages you purchase.
- The following words indicate sugar has been added to the product that you might see on the food label: sugar, high fructose corn syrup, glucose, fructose, sucrose, honey, cane sugar, brown sugar, agave, fruit juice concentrate, molasses, and syrup.

### RESOURCES:

- Alliance for a Healthier Generation
  [https://www.healthiergeneration.org/live_healthier/eat_healthier/drop_liquid_calories/](https://www.healthiergeneration.org/live_healthier/eat_healthier/drop_liquid_calories/)
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
  [http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.html](http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.html)
- American Heart Association
  [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Sugar_UCM_306725_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Sugar_UCM_306725_Article.jsp)
  [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/Dietary-Recommendations-for-Healthy-Children_UCM_303886_Article.jsp#.VnlgHEnrJ1w](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/Dietary-Recommendations-for-Healthy-Children_UCM_303886_Article.jsp#.VnlgHEnrJ1w)