

# The Best Drinks for Children

There's a lot in the news lately about children and the rising rate of childhood obesity. Studies are showing that what children drink plays an important part in keeping children healthy and at a proper weight.

## What do children need?

Growing children (age two and above) need two servings from the milk group each day. For most children, this means two (8-ounce or 1-cup) glasses of milk. Children under two years of age need breast milk or whole milk for proper brain development. By age two, children can be drinking reduced fat (2 percent or 1 percent) milk. Children over four years old may have nonfat milk. Reducing the fat in milk takes away some of the calories, which can end up as fat if a child isn't active enough to burn them off.



*Fruit drinks and beverages are mostly sugar water.*

## What about juice?

Take a closer look...

Many caregivers and parents give children fruit juices and fruit drinks during the day, thinking they are giving them extra vitamins. Take a close look at these fruit juices and drinks to see what children are really drinking. Look on the back of the bottle for the box of Nutrition Facts. Look carefully at the amount of sugar in these drinks.

Here's a closer look at how much sugar is in some popular children's drinks:

Drink	Serving Size	Amount of sugar
Soda	8-ounce cup (less than 1 can)	26 grams
Fruit punch juice drink	8-ounce cup	30 grams
Fruit juice cocktail	8-ounce cup	34 grams
100% juice (no sugar added)	8-ounce cup	26 grams

Read the labels on containers carefully. Fruit juice drinks, fruit juice beverages, and fruit juice cocktails are really a lot of sugar water with a small amount of fruit juice. Many of these drinks have more sugar in them than a

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size: 8 oz.	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories 128</b>	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat	0%
Sodium 16mg	1%
Total Carb. 31g	10%
Sugars 30g	
Protein 0g	

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Water is a great drink for children and adults.

### What should children be drinking?

If we want children to be healthy, this is what they should be drinking each day:

<b>Milk</b>	2 (8-ounce) cups (Serve low-fat milk to children over two years old)
<b>100% juice</b>	1 (6-ounce or 3/4 cup) cup
<b>Water</b>	As much as the child wants

To your good health!

can of soda. At first glance you may think these are good drinks because “fruit” is in the name. You’re really getting a lot of sugar water.

Even 100 percent juice has a lot of sugar. This is because of the natural sugars that are in most fruits. These natural sugars are what make an apple taste sweet.

Research is linking the drinking of soda, juices, and juice drinks to the rise in children’s obesity. Studies show that children who drink more than one glass of these drinks each day are more likely to become obese.

### How about water?

Many children are used to the sugary sweet taste of soda, fruit drinks, and juices. It’s important to teach children that water is a healthy drink. Water has no fat or sugar. It’s low cost and good for children and adults. Set a good example for the children by drinking water.



**Pennsylvania Pathways**

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for Child Caregivers

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Sources: USDA Food Guide Pyramid; “Television Watching and Soft Drink Consumption,” from the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine; “Sweetened Drinks Put Children at Risk for Obesity,” from Cornell News

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