



Kids and Juice: Too Much of a Good Thing?



Fruit juice tastes sweet and most kids enjoy drinking it. It can supply vitamin C, folic acid, potassium and vitamin A that growing children need. However, juice is low in calcium, protein and vitamin D that are found in milk. Kids need to get enough calcium and vitamin D for healthy bone growth. Drinking too much juice leaves little room in a child’s diet for milk and other healthy foods.

- **Babies do not need to drink juice before the age of 6 months.** Most juices contain more than twice as much carbohydrate in the form of sugar than breast milk or formula.

This can cause bloating, gas, abdominal pain and diarrhea when consumed in large amounts.

- **Toddlers and older children can have one serving of fruit juice a day.** Too much juice can cause tooth decay if it is consumed throughout the day. Dilute the juice with water to reduce the amount of sugar available to bacteria that cause cavities. Too much juice can also lead to chronic diarrhea, delayed growth and can contribute to obesity.

How Much is Enough?	
Age	Recommended Amount of Juice*
0 – 6 months	None. Breast milk or formula is all your baby needs to drink.
6 – 12 months (optional)	No more than 125ml (½ cup or 4 ounces). If offered, give in a cup and not a bottle. Fruit will give your baby more chewing opportunities. Pureed, mashed or soft fruit is a better choice than juice.
1 – 6 years	No more than 125 – 180 ml a day (½ – ⅔ cup or 4 – 6 ounces). Give juice at set times during the day such as snack time. Offer water to thirsty kids.
7 – 18 years	No more than 250 – 375 ml a day (1 – 1 ½ cups or 8 – 12 ounces). Make sure kids have a personal water bottle for active play, sports and when travelling.

*Amounts recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement: The Use and Misuse of Fruit Juice in Pediatrics, May 2001.

- **All juices are not equal.** Look for 100% pure juice. Fruit drinks, beverages, fruitades and punches have added sugar and fewer nutrients. Some may contain as little as 5 – 10% real juice.
- **Read the ingredient list.** If sugar or glucose is the first ingredient on the list, this is not the best choice.
- **Always choose pasteurized juices.** Fresh juices made directly from squeezing the fruit are 100% juice, but they may or may not be pasteurized. Unpasteurized juice may be contaminated with dangerous *E.coli 0157:H7* bacteria. Pasteurization destroys any harmful bacteria that are present and does not affect nutrients. All frozen juice or juice from concentrate are pasteurized. Unpasteurized apple and orange juice have been linked to food poisoning outbreaks.
- **Avoid drinks and juices with added herbs.** A variety of products are available that include herbs such as ginseng and echinacea. These products are not recommended for children.
- **Orange juice fortified with Calcium is available in not-from-concentrate and frozen concentrate.** The cost is similar to the non-fortified version of the same product. One cup of juice contains about 300 mg of added calcium or the same amount found in one cup of milk. It is an easy way to boost calcium intake.

Juice can be a part of a healthy diet. Just don't overdo it. *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* suggests 5 – 10 servings of vegetables and fruit each day. Offer whole fruit as an alternative to juice.



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