

Sugary drinks and obesity in children

The 2002 National Children's Nutrition Survey revealed that 31% of New Zealand children aged 5-14 years are overweight or obese. There is extensive evidence that drinks high in sugar (whether natural or added) play a role in promoting weight gain in children.

Did you know? The portion sizes of Coca-Cola in the US have increased from less than 200ml in the 1950s to almost 600ml in 2000. The 600ml bottle is a popular serving sold in NZ. New Zealanders are now the 11th highest consumers of soft drink per capita worldwide.

What about flavoured waters and diet drinks?

Flavoured waters generally contain less sugar than other sugary drinks however they are often sold in large portion sizes, which encourages increased consumption. Diet drinks like flavoured waters encourage children to always want a flavoured drink and due to their low acidity can still contribute to poor dental health.

Leading nutrition agencies in NZ (*Agencies for Nutrition Action*) have recently provided recommendations for children around beverage choice, which are summarised below.

Plain water and reduced fat milk are the best drinks for children. Encourage as much as possible.

Keep a jug of chilled water in the fridge. Buy younger children their own special water bottle or fun straw. Ensure school drinking fountains are clean. Reduced fat milk can be introduced from 2 years of age.

Sugary drinks are not recommended for children

*Best practice for schools -Do not sell, OR limit days available for sale.
Offer small serving size only.*

If chosen limit to 1 cup (250ml) in total per day:

- Flavoured waters
- Diet drinks
- 100% fruit juices
Dilute with water, almost fill a glass with water and then add a little juice
- Flavoured milk
Half fill a glass with flavoured milk and then dilute with reduced fat milk

If chosen limit to less than once a week, 1 cup (250ml) in total:

- Regular soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Sports drinks
- Fruit drinks

Healthy Nibbles Nutrition & physical activity information for primary schools

For more information visit: www.cph.co.nz

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