

# Sweet drinks- there is a simple answer!

In many areas of nutrition, there is no such thing as a simple solution, but when it comes to sugary and sweet drinks the opposite is true. The answer *is* simple - **plain water and reduced fat milk\* are the best drinks for children.**

A huge amount of money is spent by drink manufacturers heavily promoting their products, with re-branding, sponsorship, old-fashioned advertising and giveaways. Some sweet drinks have grabbed media attention recently, and therefore are worthy of some extra comment.

## Sports drinks

Sports drinks seem to be the latest 'trend' with both adults and children reaching for the bottle as soon as they tie their sneakers- convinced that we 'need' these products. While sports drinks can have advantages for athletes competing in high intensity exercise, they are high in sugar (**around 12 teaspoons per bottle**) and have no advantage for the majority of the community. In fact they may well be undoing some of the benefits of being active – by adding extra kilojoules to our diets as well as bathing our teeth in an acidic solution that promotes tooth decay.

## Diet drinks

While diet drinks might appear to be a good solution, they are not a healthy option and promoting them to children is not a good idea. From a very young age, children can learn that drinks should come from a bottle, be coloured, flavoured and taste sweet – and be purchased from a shop!. Their acidity can contribute to poor dental health and they can contain significant amounts of caffeine. Diet drinks should be treated as an occasional drink, just like sugary drinks.

## Fruit juice

Even pure fruit juice is high in sugar. For under fives, it is recommended that fruit juice is diluted to a 1 in 4 solution (i.e. ¼ cup of juice, topped up to a full cup with water). We recommend children have no more than one cup of diluted juice each day.

## Drink guidelines for children

*Flavoured milk/water, diet drinks, pure fruit juice – do not offer to children or limit to one glass a day*

*Soft-drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks, cordials – do not offer to children or limit to one glass a week*

**Remember, plain water and reduced-fat milk\* are the best drinks for children.**

\*Light blue and green top milk can be introduced to children from 2 years of age.

## National Drink Water Week- 20-26 March

Packs are available from the New Zealand Kidney Foundation. These include posters, activities, information on the benefits of drinking water and colouring sheets. For more information check out:

[www.nzkidneyfoundation.co.nz](http://www.nzkidneyfoundation.co.nz) under National Drink Water Week

## Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and physical activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

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District Health Board

Te Pōari Hauora o Waitaha