

Sweet drinks

Sweet drinks are not needed as part of a healthy diet, as they do not provide much nutrition. Sweet drinks can fill children up, and lead to a decreased appetite for other foods. Because of their high sugar content, sweet drinks may also contribute to tooth decay and play a role in excess weight gain in children.

Sweet drinks include:

- soft drinks
- flavoured mineral water
- flavoured milk
- cordial
- sports drinks
- energy drinks
- fruit drinks
- fruit juice.

If you do offer sweet drinks occasionally, provide only very small amounts, and not every day. To limit the amount of sugar consumed, dilute sweet drinks with water when they are offered.

Never offer sweet drinks in a bottle, as this can lead to tooth decay and reduce children's appetites. Only offer sweet drinks in small amounts from a cup, if at all.



GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



The importance of drinking water

For more information

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



Water is essential for life. Young children in particular are at risk of thirst and dehydration, and should have access to drinking water at all times.

Sweet drinks, or drinks that are high in sugar, are 'sometimes foods'. These should only be offered occasionally, and in very small amounts.

Water for babies

Breastmilk is the ideal food for babies until around six months of age, and should continue to be their main drink until at least 12 months of age. However, from around six months, pre-boiled cooled water can be offered in a bottle or cup as an additional drink.

Water for toddlers

Water should be available at all times. Always provide water at meal and snack times, and also offer water between meals and snacks. Toddlers have enough skill to drink water from a cup, and should not need to be fed with a bottle.

Water for preschool-aged children

Water should be available at all times. Offer water with meals and snacks, and make sure tap water is available between meals so children can help themselves. Encourage preschool-aged children to pour their own water from a jug into a cup. Preschoolers should also have their own water bottle that they can help themselves to at any time.

Toddlers should be encouraged to drink around one litre of fluid per day. Three- to five-year-olds need around 1.2 litres of fluid each day.

Tips for providing water to children

- Keep a jug of fresh tap water within reach.
- On warm days, keep the jug of water in the fridge.
- Send a labelled, clear water bottle to the early childhood setting each day.
- Pack a water bottle when heading out to the shops or the park.
- Make sure that adults role-model by drinking plenty of water too!

Plain milk

Plain, unflavoured milk is also an important drink for young children, and can be offered at meal or snack times to children over 12 months. Be careful not to offer too much plain milk, especially just before meals – children can easily fill up on milk and not be hungry for their meal. Offer reduced-fat, unflavoured milk to children over two years. Reduced-fat milks are not appropriate for children under the age of two.

