

Cut Down on Sugary Drinks



These drinks have a lot of added sugar that can hurt your child's teeth. They can also lead to weight gain and health problems.

- Water is always the best choice! City water has fluoride in it which helps keep teeth strong.
- Low-fat plain milk (full-fat for under 2 years old) has calcium and vitamin D for strong teeth.
- Sports drinks are only for athletes that sweat a lot and exercise for more than 1 hour per day.
- One can of soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar! Leave soda for special occasions, if at all. This goes for sweetened iced tea, lemonade and fruit drinks too.
- Energy drinks are loaded with caffeine, which can be dangerous for children.

Try it at Home!

Offer Choices within Limits

When your child asks for a drink, give them choices that you are OK with, like water and milk. Say "you can have water or milk", and let your child pick their drink. Stay firm! It may take a few tries.

Teach By Example

Your children look up to you and watch your habits. Show your children a healthy habit by drinking water or milk.

Choose one healthy habit to try:

- ◇ Add a fruit and a vegetable into each day
- ◇ Limit sugary foods to once a week
- ◇ Replace a sugary dessert with a piece of fruit
- ◇ Limit sugary drinks to once a week
- ◇ Replace sugary drinks with water or plain milk
- ◇ Your own idea:

Now choose one idea to help you try it at home:

- ◇ Teach by example
- ◇ Decide together
- ◇ Shape the environment
- ◇ Offer choices within limits

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Healthy Foods for Healthy Smiles

Ideas for how parents and caregivers can support their child in creating healthy habits to keep them healthy and cavity-free!



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Introduction

Healthy nutrition habits affect our overall health— including our teeth and gums! It is important to eat more foods like fruits and vegetables and avoid sugary foods and drinks. It can be hard to make these healthy habits happen, but as parents and caregivers, you have an effect on what your children eat and drink. This handout gives ideas for parents to help make the healthy choice, the easier choice at home.

Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables have vitamins, minerals and fiber for strong, healthy teeth, gums and bodies.

How much do we need?

Children - aim for 2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables each day.

Older children and adults - 2 cups of fruit and 3 cups of vegetables each day.

Variety is important! The different colors help our bodies in different ways. Aim for as many different colored fruits and vegetables each day as possible.



Try it at Home!

Teach by Example

You are your child's best role model! Grab a piece of fruit for snack and make half of your dinner plate fruits or vegetables.

Decide Together

Include your child in choosing which fruits and vegetables to buy. Kids are more likely to eat a food they have picked.



Eat Less Sugary Foods

Sugary foods like donuts, cookies, chocolate, candies and processed fruit snacks can cause cavities in teeth and lead to life-long health problems in the body. Cavities are especially caused by “sticky” candy that stays in teeth. Think of sugary foods and processed fruit snacks as a special treat and limit them to once a week.

Try it at Home!

Shape the Environment

Stock your shelves with healthy foods and try not to bring sugary foods into your home.

Decide Together

With your child, brainstorm a list of healthy snacks to keep in your home.

