



Juice: How much is too much?

Most children love juice, but are parents giving their children too much of a good thing? Fruit juice can be a healthy part of a child's diet. 100% fruit juice is an important source of vitamin C for children. However, drinking large quantities of juice can crowd out other foods in a child's diet and can even cause malnutrition. Juice is not a bad food, but is sometimes an overused food.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued a statement advising parents to limit the amount of juice children drink. Their recommendations include:

- ★ Infants should not be given juice until they are 6 months old.
- ★ Children 1-6 yrs old should limit their juice intake to 4-6 ounces per day.
- ★ Older children should limit their juice intake to 8-12 ounces per day

(The CDPHE-CACFP recommends limiting the serving of 100% full strength juice to twice per week and encourages the use of fruit and vegetables instead of juices.)

Why is too much juice a bad idea?

Moderation and balance are the keys to a healthy diet!

- ➔ Children who drink too much juice may suffer from malnutrition due to juice replacing other healthy foods in their diet. Children like the taste of juice, and if allowed, will often drink juice all day. If a child fills up on juice, he or she may not eat well at mealtimes. Children who are served juice instead of milk with their meals, miss out on all of the important nutrients found in milk.
- ➔ Excessive juice consumption can cause diarrhea, abdominal pain and bloating in young children.
- ➔ Juice lacks the healthy fiber found in whole fruits.
(Compare 0.1 g fiber in 1/2 cup of apple juice vs. 3.7 grams of fiber in a medium apple).
- ➔ Allowing a child to carry juice around in a bottle or cup all day can lead to tooth decay.

Tips for parents and caregivers:

- √ Make sure you are serving 100% fruit juice when serving juice to children.
- √ Follow the guidelines above to prevent children from drinking too much juice.
- √ If you are buying refrigerated juice, read the label and make sure the juice is pasteurized. Unpasteurized juice can cause serious illness in children.
- √ Offer children water when they are thirsty between meals. Do not allow children to carry around bottles or cups filled with juice or milk. Do not give babies a bedtime bottle containing anything other than water.

