

# Fact Sheet for **Parents** **GROWING UP HEALTHY**



5 or more fruits and vegetables • 2 hours or less of screen time • 1 hour of physical activity • Almost no sugary beverages



## Did you know that...

One bottle of soda (20 ounces) has about 18 teaspoons of sugar?

You'd have to bike for about one hour to burn off the calories in a 20-ounce bottle of cola?

Kids spend more of their own money on candy and soda than on anything else (including games, clothes, and CDs)?

## Try to make sure your child drinks almost no sugary beverages—no more than two servings per week.

These are drinks to which the manufacturers have added sugar, including:

- Regular sodas like cola and root beer
- Fruit drinks like lemonade and juice beverages that are not 100% fruit
- Sweetened iced tea
- Sports drinks
- Coffee drinks

Healthy alternatives to sugary drinks are beverages such as milk and 100% juice, which are rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients—things that are good for the health of your children and entire family.

## What is the big deal?

We all like to drink a soda now and then—and that's okay. But kids today are drinking too much soda. Soft drink consumption has more than doubled since 1971. The average teenage boy drinks 2 12-ounce sodas per day, adding up to more than 700 cans per year. The average teenage girl drinks 1.4 12-ounce sodas per day, adding up to more than 500 cans per year.

We want our kids to have healthy teeth. Sugary drinks also can cause tooth decay. In addition to the extra calories, drinking too many sugary drinks poses a risk for cavities because of their high sugar content. These drinks may also erode tooth enamel because of their acidity.

We want our kids to have strong bones. When kids drink more sugary drinks, they drink less milk. Calcium and vitamin D are important, but only 14.3% of children drink 3 or more glasses of milk a day. So let's help them get more non-fat or low-fat milk and grow healthier bones.



**We want our kids to eat and drink foods that make their bodies strong.** Sugary drinks don't have nutrients that children need to grow strong bodies. That is why water, milk, and 100% fruit juice are important options to offer your children and family.

**We want our kids to have a healthy weight.** We all want what is best for our children and that includes a healthy body. Sad to say, about 35% of Delaware kids have an unhealthy weight. Sugary drinks are a part of the problem:

- Researchers have linked the daily consumption of even one sugary drink to a 60% increase in the risk of unhealthy weight. Diet soft drinks (sugar-free) do not seem to cause overweight, but most kids don't choose these drinks.
- What child considers sugary drinks dessert? With their extra calories, sugary drinks should be considered the same as a dessert food—something you eat or drink only on special occasions. Part of the problem is that people who take in these extra calories while drinking sugary drinks do not necessarily eat less at meals. They consider it a drink and nothing more.
- Many of us know a friend or family member who has Type 2 diabetes. An alarming number of children are now being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. No one would want their children to have to deal with this disease when they are older or even NOW. It's more important than ever to help our kids make healthy choices.

## Help your family to drink **ALMOST NO** sugary beverages!

This may not be the easiest conversation. Some kids (and other family members) may not understand why you are making this change. Let your entire family know why having fewer sugary drinks is important, and get them to help you come up with some ideas that make sense for everyone in your family.

### Tips for making easy changes

- **Change what you drink with meals.** Serve water, fat-free or 1% milk, or 100% juice during mealtime and snacks. Let your children decide which of these healthy alternatives they would like to drink. It will make them more cooperative in the long run.
- **Start at home.** When you go shopping, buy healthy drinks instead of sugary drinks. This way, while they are at home, it's not easy for your kids to grab a soda any time of the day.
- **Support your kids when they make healthy choices.** If they ask for water or milk instead of sugary drinks, cheer them on. You can say things like, "Excellent choice!" or "It really pleases me when you ask for..." or "Give me a high five for choosing..."
- **Water WITH A TWIST.** Make your drink ½ juice or sports drinks and ½ water or sparkly water. This decreases the overall sugar content and calories.
- **When thirsty, THINK WATER.** Keep water on hand to quench your thirst when you are out and about to avoid grabbing those convenient but sugary drinks.
- **The ultimate challenge.** Can you do it? Limit sugary drinks for each person in the family to one or two a week. If you are able to do none at all, that is great. But drinking only one every now and then is pretty good too!