

# PRESCHOOL NUTRITION NEWS

A newsletter for preschool parents and teachers



## What Preschoolers Drink

What children drink is as important as what they eat.

- Water should be the go-to beverage for children when they are thirsty and between meals and snacks. It's also a good habit for children to learn to drink water when thirsty.
- Serve 100% juice with breakfast or snacks. The vitamin C in the juice will help the absorption of iron from breakfast cereal, oatmeal, toast, and other fortified grains. Limit juice to 3/4 cup (6-ounces) or less each day.
- Serve low-fat or skim milk at mealtimes. Drinking milk is a healthy habit to instill in children and an easy way to ensure they get enough calcium.

## Why Water?

All living things need water to survive. Water is the best choice for thirst for many reasons. It's super healthy with zero calories, no added sugar, and very inexpensive or free. Here's how much H<sub>2</sub>O kids should drink every day:

- Toddlers: 2 to 4 cups
- 4-8 years: 5 cups
- 9-13 years: 7 to 8 cups

It's important to remember kids may need more if they are very active or if it's very warm outside.

## Jazz Up Your Water

If your preschoolers don't love plain water you can jazz it up by squeezing in a bit of lemon, lime, or orange juice. Or try making Agua Fresca:

### Ingredients:

1 cup cleaned and chopped fresh fruit

- Watermelon
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Cucumber

1 cup water

1 cup ice

### Directions:

Put all ingredients into a blender. Blend until everything is smooth and well combined.



## Drinks to Limit

**Sugary drinks:** Children who are less than 2 years of age should not have sugar-sweetened drinks. This includes sports drinks, juice cocktails, sodas, lemonade, and sweetened water. These drinks discourage a habit of drinking plain water and can add extra "empty calories" to the diet. Added sugars can lead to excess weight gain, dental cavities, and can fill children up with empty calories.

**Juice:** Even 100% juice should be strictly limited. While it does contain the same vitamins as fruit, it is also high in natural sugar and calories and low in the healthy fiber found in whole fruit. Young children should have no more than 4-6 oz of 100% fruit juice per day. Children less than a year should not drink any juice at all.

**Flavored milk:** There are vitamins and minerals found in flavored milk, but flavored milk is much higher in added sugar. These added sugars should be avoided to discourage a preference for sweet flavors, and because they add empty calories to the diet. For young children, it's a good habit to learn to drink unflavored milk.

**Artificially-sweetened drinks:** Because health risks for children from artificial sweeteners are not well understood, it is best to avoid these drinks. These drinks also set up a preference for sweet flavors in children. Instead, make water readily available to encourage healthy hydration.



### Symptoms of Dehydration

- Dry lips or sticky mouth
- Less urination or dark-colored urine - remember urine should be very light yellow, almost clear
- Sleepy and irritable
- Flushed skin

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