

Fruit Juice Concerns

Good old-fashioned water is still the best fluid a child can drink! Water is important for fluid balance and children should be encouraged to drink it from a young age.

Fruit juices all contain sugars, either natural or added. You may view fruit juice as a healthy drink for your child because it's made from fruit or the label says that the product is "natural" or has "no added sugar". However, whatever the fruit juice, it still contains sugar! Because of this, we discourage juice even if it is diluted with water.

Fruit in its whole form (rather than as a juice) provides vitamin C in a natural package. As well as vitamin C, whole fruit also provides fiber. Fiber is important because it keeps the bowel healthy and also helps your child stay feel full longer. Juice is not high in fiber and can make a child feel full quickly. If this occurs it may stop them from eating other nutritious foods throughout the day.

High sugar content within juices, regardless of whether it is natural or added, can contribute to obesity and tooth decay. It is recommended that babies in particular should not be put to bed with sugary drinks in their bottles, including juice. Bottles can sit in the mouth and drip the contents slowly onto the teeth. It is the duration that the liquid sits in the mouth that contributes to tooth decay. If your child does have fruit juice, brushing your child's teeth immediately afterwards is essential.

*If sugary drinks are available, your child will not readily accept plain water because they have developed a taste for a sweetened drink.

*A 200ml glass of juice can contain up to five teaspoons of sugar.

*Constant sipping on sugary fruit drinks is a major cause of tooth decay.

*Children need small drinks often. It is a good idea to offer water at every snack or meal time. An ideal amount of water for children is around 4-6 glasses per day.

Patricia A. Carta, D.M.D.
Pediatric Dentistry
583 Saybrook Road
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: 860-347-4681
www.doctorpat.com