

# Beverages for children



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH

## Water

Children need to drink enough fluids during the day to stay hydrated and to keep their bodies working well. Water should be available for children to drink throughout the day.

Offer more water if your child has a fever or when it is very hot.

Children also need more water when they are physically active. If your child plays a sport, make sure he or she has water available.

Sports drinks are for times of intense physical activity lasting longer than an hour.

## Milk & alternatives

Canada's Food Guide recommends that children ages four to eight have two servings of fluid milk every day (500 ml or two cups).

Children 9–13 years of age should have three to four servings from the Milk and Alternatives food group every day, and at least two of those servings should be fluid milk. This helps children get enough vitamin D, as it is difficult to get enough vitamin D needed each day from foods. (Note: all fluid milk in Canada is fortified with vitamin D, but most other milk products do not have vitamin D added.)

Children over two years of age may be given pasteurized lower-fat cow's milk (one per cent, two per cent or skim).

If you choose to give your child a vegetarian beverage, be sure it is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Look at the Nutrition Facts table on the package: the percentage DV for calcium and vitamin D should be at least 25 per cent.

## Juice

Your child does not need to drink juice. Canada's Food Guide suggests we choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice so the child gets more fibre.

If you choose to serve juice to your child:

- Choose 100 per cent unsweetened fruit juice. (This could include ready-made juice from concentrate or frozen juice concentrate you make yourself by adding water.)
- Limit juice to 125 ml or one-half cup (four ounces) a day

## Sugar-sweetened beverages

Avoid the following beverages which are high in sugar and low in nutrients:

- Pop/soda
- Drinks
- Beverages
- Punches
- Cocktails
- Drinks ending in "-ade" such as lemonade

## Suggestions for serving beverages

- Serve milk at mealtimes.
- Serve only 100 per cent unsweetened fruit juice if serving juice.
- Limit juice to 125 ml (four ounces) a day.
- Offer water for thirst between meals and snacks and during physical activity.
- Avoid pop and other sugar-sweetened beverages.

Do not give tea, coffee, energy drinks or other caffeinated drinks to children.

## Region of Waterloo Public Health

Healthy Children Info Line

519-883-2245