

# Healthy Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood

These recommendations were developed as part of a collaboration of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association. This cooperative effort transpired under the leadership of Healthy Eating Research, a leading nutrition research organization, through funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The recommendations outlined on the next pages by age are intended for healthy children in the United States and do not address medical situations in which specific nutrition guidance is needed to manage a health condition.

For the complete consensus statement, visit:

- <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HER-HealthyBeverage-ConsensusStatement.pdf>

For the complete technical report, visit:

- <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/research/technical-scientific-report-healthy-beverage-consumption-in-early-childhood-recommendations-from-key-national-health-and-nutrition-organizations/>

**Table. Summary of Recommendations for Healthy Beverage Consumption, Ages 0-5 Years\***

		0-6 months	6-12 months	12-24 months	2-5 years		Notes
					2-3 years	4-5 years	
Beverages Recommended as Part of a Healthy Diet	Plain drinking water	No supplemental drinking water needed	Approximately 0.5-1.0 cups (4-8 oz.)/day in a cup. Begin offering during meals once solid foods are introduced.	1-4 cups (8-32 oz.) per day	1-4 cups (8-32 oz.) per day	1.5-5 cups (12-40 oz.) per day	Where an individual child falls within these ranges for 12 months to 5 years will depend on the amounts of other beverages consumed during the day.
	Plain, pasteurized milk	Not recommended	Not recommended	2-3 cups (16-24 oz.) per day whole milk	Up to 2 cups (16 oz.) per day skim (fat-free) or low-fat (1%) milk	Up to 2.5 cups (20 oz.) per day skim (fat-free) or low-fat (1%) milk	For 12-24 months, reduced-fat (2%) or low-fat (1%) milk may be considered in consultation with a pediatrician, especially if weight gain is excessive or family history is positive for obesity, dyslipidemia, or other cardiovascular disease; the total amount of milk consumed during this age will depend on how much solid food is being eaten.
Beverages to Limit	100% juice	Not recommended	Not recommended	Whole fruit preferred. No more than 0.5 cup (4 oz.) per day 100% juice.	Whole fruit preferred. No more than 0.5 cup (4 oz.) per day 100% juice.	Whole fruit preferred. No more than 0.5-0.75 cup (4-6 oz.) per day 100% juice.	Amounts listed for ages 12 months to 5 years are upper limits (not minimum requirements) that may be consumed only if fruit intake recommendations cannot be met with whole fruit.

**Note:** All amounts listed are per day, unless otherwise noted; 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces.

\* The expert panel did not address breast milk or infant formula as recommendations in these areas vary by the infant's age, weight, and developmental milestones and are generally well understood and widely accepted.

Table. Continued \*

		0-6 months	6-12 months	12-24 months	2-5 years	Notes
Beverages Not Recommended as Part of a Healthy Diet	Plant milk/ Non-dairy beverages	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended for exclusive consumption in place of dairy milk; consume only when medically indicated (e.g., cow's milk allergy or intolerance) or to meet specific dietary preferences (e.g., vegan)	Consume only when medically indicated (e.g., allergy or intolerance) or to meet specific dietary preferences (e.g., vegan)	Consumption of these beverages as a full replacement for dairy milk should be undertaken in consultation with a health care provider so that adequate intake of key nutrients commonly obtained from dairy milk can be considered in dietary planning.
	Flavored milk	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Added sugars intake should be avoided in children.
	Toddler milk	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	These products offer no unique nutritional value beyond what a nutritionally adequate diet provides and may contribute added sugars to the diet and undermine sustained breastfeeding.
	Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB)	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Strong evidence demonstrates the adverse health effects of SSB, which include, but are not limited to, soft drinks/soda, fruit drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, fruit-ades, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and sweetened coffee and tea beverages.
	Beverages with low-calorie sweeteners (LCS)	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	This recommendation is based on expert opinion given that early childhood is a critical developmental period, and there is a lack of evidence regarding the long-term health impact(s) of LCS consumption in young children.
	Caffeinated beverages	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Caffeinated beverages are not appropriate for young children.

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