

# Healthy Children, Healthy State:

# SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

## Sugary drinks threaten the health of children:

The American Heart Association recommends children younger than 18 consume less than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugars daily.<sup>6</sup> A 12-ounce soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar on average.<sup>7\*</sup>

### Sugar Consumption Crisis:



Kids who drink one sugar-sweetened beverage per day can gain up to **14.5 pounds** of unnecessary weight (depending on age and size) in one year<sup>8</sup>.



Every day **25.0%** of 2nd graders drink 1 or more regular sodas<sup>2</sup>.



Every day **41.8%** of 11th graders drink 1 or more regular sodas<sup>2</sup>.



Every day **60%** of 11th graders drink one or more sugar-sweetened beverages\*, differing by race/ ethnicity:

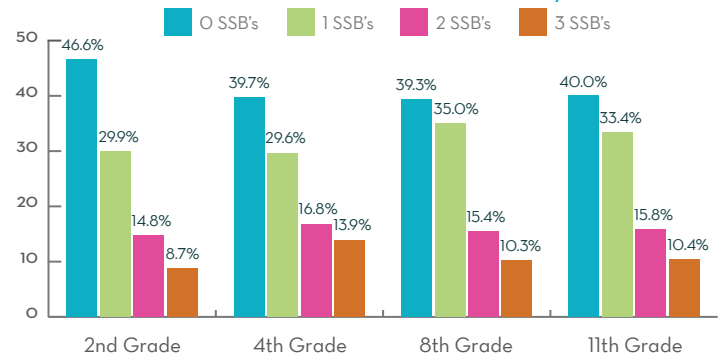
- **76.7%** of African Americans;
- **61.8%** of Hispanics;
- **50.7%** of White/Other<sup>2</sup>.

### Current and Lifetime Risks:

Sugar sweetened beverages have negative health associations.

- Tooth Decay
- Overweight and Obesity<sup>4</sup>
- Type 2 Diabetes<sup>3</sup>
- Heart Disease<sup>9</sup>

Number of Times Sugar-Sweetened Beverages\* Were Consumed Yesterday<sup>2</sup>:



## We can improve what Texas children drink by:<sup>5</sup>

- Providing clean drinking water in schools and child care centers and promoting water as the healthiest drink
- Prohibiting sale of sugar-sweetened beverages in schools and other youth-oriented settings
- Encouraging food marketing companies to reduce unhealthy food and drink marketing to children
- Establishing healthy checkout areas without sugar-sweetened beverages\* at grocery, retail, and corner stores

\*Sugar-sweetened beverage is defined as a regular (not diet) soda, punch, or sports drink on the Texas SPAN Survey<sup>2</sup>

# Current Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Guidelines

**Infants younger than 12 months<sup>1</sup>** should not drink juice, milk, flavored milks, 'transition' or 'weaning' formulas, plant-based/non-dairy milks, drinks with caffeine, low-calorie sweetened drinks, or sugar-sweetened drinks.

**Children between 1 - 3 years old<sup>1</sup>** should limit fruit juice consumption to 4 ounces (1/2 cup) per day. They should not drink flavored milks, 'transition' or 'weaning' formulas, plant-based/non-dairy milks, drinks with caffeine, low-calorie sweetened drinks, or sugar-sweetened drinks.

**Children between 4 - 5 years old<sup>1</sup>** should limit fruit juice consumption to 4 - 6 ounces (1/2 - 3/4 cup) per day. They should not drink flavored milks, 'transition' or 'weaning' formulas, plant-based/non-dairy milks, drinks with caffeine, low-calorie sweetened drinks, or sugar-sweetened drinks.

**Adolescents between 2 - 18 years old<sup>6</sup>** should consume less than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugars daily.

## References

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2. School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project. Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN project details available online at [go.uth.edu/SPAN](http://go.uth.edu/SPAN).  
  
The School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project is a surveillance system monitoring the prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-aged children in Texas conducted by researchers at the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN has been funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services since 2000 to conduct height and weight measurements across different grade levels.
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9. Pacheco, LS, et al. Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake and Cardiovascular Disease Risk in the California Teachers Study. (2020). (<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/JAHA.119.014883>)

## About the Texas Child Health Status Report

These reports utilize state-level data from the School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health. This project is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

Learn more at [go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth](http://go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth)