Healthy Children, Healthy State:

SUGAR SWEETENED DRINKS

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. A 12-ounce soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar on average.

Sugar Consumption Crisis:

- Kids who drink one sugar-sweetened drink per day can gain up to 14.5 pounds of unnecessary weight (depending on age and size) in one year.
- Every day 31.6% of 2nd graders drink 1 or more regular sodas and 40.1% drink 1 or more fruit-flavored drinks.
- Every day 44.3% of 11th graders drink 1 or more regular sodas and 34.3% drink 1 or more fruit-flavored drinks.
- Every day 80.6% of 11th graders drink one or more sugar-sweetened drinks, differing by race/ethnicity:
  - 83.0% of African Americans;
  - 79.1% of Hispanics;
  - 81.9% of White/Other.

Current and Lifetime Risks:

- Sugar sweetened drinks have negative health associations.
  - Tooth Decay
  - Overweight and Obesity
  - Type 2 Diabetes
  - Heart Disease

Number of Times Sugar-Sweetened Drinks Were Consumed Yesterday:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 SSB's</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 SSB's</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SSB's</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SSB's</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can improve what Texas children drink by:

- Providing clean drinking water in schools and child care centers and promoting water as the healthiest drink
- Prohibiting sale of sugar-sweetened drinks 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 drinks at grocery, retail, and corner stores
- Requiring food marketing companies to promote honest labeling and alert consumers to high levels of added sugars on fruit drink labels.

*Sugar-sweetened drink is defined as flavored milk, regular (not diet) soda, punch/fruit drinks, coffee/tea with sugar, and energy drinks on the Texas SPAN Survey."
Current Sugar-Sweetened Drink Guidelines

Infants younger than 12 months\(^1\) 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\(^1\) 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\(^1\) 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\(^6\) should consume less than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugars daily.

References


2. School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project 2019-2020. Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN project details available online at 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.


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

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