

# 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.<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 drink 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 **31.6%** of 2nd graders drink 1 or more regular sodas and **40.1%** drink 1 or more fruit-flavored drinks<sup>2</sup>.



Every day **44.3%** of 11th graders drink 1 or more regular sodas and **34.3%** drink 1 or more fruit-flavored drinks<sup>2</sup>.



Every day **80.6%** of 11th graders drink one or more sugar-sweetened drinks\*, differing by race/ ethnicity:

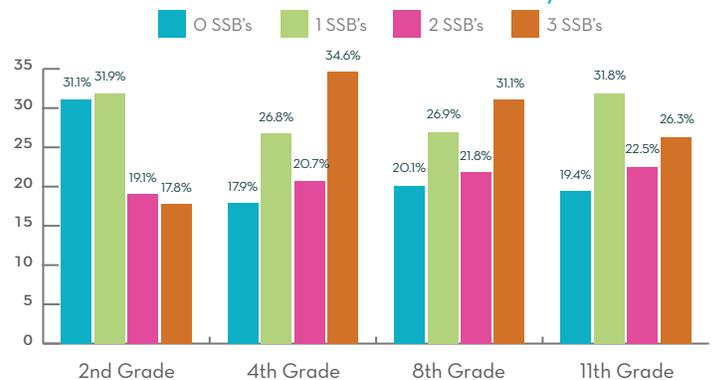
- **83.0%** of African Americans;
- **79.1%** of Hispanics;
- **81.9%** of White/Other<sup>2</sup>.

### Current and Lifetime Risks:

Sugar sweetened drinks 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 Drinks\* 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 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<sup>10,11</sup>

\*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<sup>2</sup>

## Current Sugar-Sweetened Drink 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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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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## 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)

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