

Child Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Texas

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

INTAKE OF SUGARY DRINKS IS HIGH IN TEXAS CHILDREN

Beverage consumption is an essential part of a healthy diet. Children and adolescents should drink plain water and plain pasteurized milk, and avoid consuming sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) for optimal health.¹

Sugary Drinks Intake Among Texas Children



78% of school-aged children and adolescents in Texas consumed at least 1 sugar-sweetened beverages in a day.

- **75%** in girls
- **81%** in boys



Fruit-flavored drinks are the most frequently consumed sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) at least once a day in 2nd, 4th, and 11th grades.

- **38%** in 2nd grade
- **46%** in 4th grade
- **36%** in 11th grade

Regular sodas are the most frequently consumed SSB at least once a day in 8th grade.

- **45%** in 8th grade



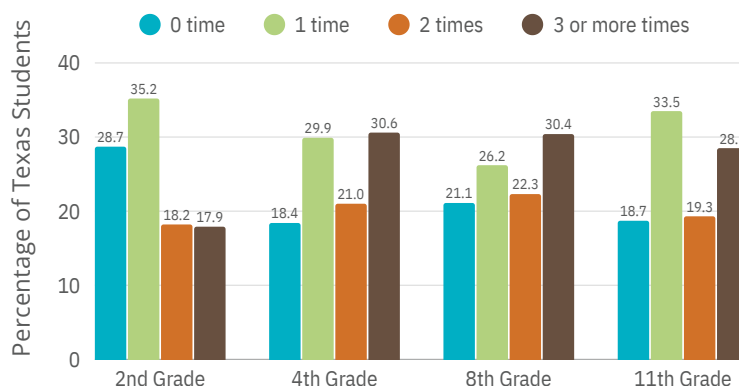
38% of children in 2nd and 4th grades consumed flavored milk or milkshake at least 1 time a day.

Why Should Children Limit Intake of Sugary drinks?

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is associated with increased risks for adverse health outcomes, including:²⁻⁵

- Overweight and obesity
- Tooth decay
- Chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension
- SSB with caffeine is associated with sleep-related issues, fatigue, late bedtime, and depression

The number of times a sugar-sweetened beverage was consumed yesterday



Note: Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) include regular sodas, coffee/tea with sugar, fruit-flavored drinks, flavored milk, and energy drinks.

How to Improve What Texas Children Drink

Parents and caregivers can help children make healthier beverage choices in beverages to meet their daily hydration needs.⁶

- Ensure clean drinking water is available for kids at home.
- Make drinking water fun by infusing water with fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs, such as flavorful cucumber, watermelon, lime, and mint.
- Encourage children to drink water at designated times and develop a water consumption routine.
- Let children choose special water bottles or cups to encourage more water intake.
- Provide more fresh fruits and vegetables to help children stay hydrated.
- Have multiple water breaks throughout the day.

Schools and child care centers can support and promote healthy beverage consumption.^{6,7}

- Ensure clean drinking water is available for students.
- Provide nutrition education about healthy beverage consumption.
- Limit or avoid selling sugar-sweetened beverages in the school.

Policy recommendations to promote healthy beverage consumption.^{7,8}

- Increase the price of sugary drinks via excise tax.
- Decrease sugary drinks and unhealthy foods marketing to children.

Current Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Guidelines

Healthy Eating Research has 3 key beverage consumption recommendations:¹

- Beverages to **drink**: Plain drinking water and plain pasteurized milk.
- Beverages to **limit**: 100% juice, plant-based milk alternatives, and sweetened flavored milk.
- Beverages to **avoid**: Sugar-sweetened beverages, beverages with non-sugar sweeteners, and caffeinated beverages.

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting added sugar in food and beverages.⁹

- Children under 2 years: Avoid added sugar.
- Children age 2 or older: Added sugar should be less than 10% of daily calories which is equal to about 50 grams a day.

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About: Texas Child Health Status Report

These reports utilize state-level data from the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (TX SPAN) Project 2021-2023 to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth

Last Updated August 4, 2025.

Suggested Citation

Zhang Y, Malkani R, Handler K, Menendez T, Flores-Thorpe S, Linton R, Hoelscher DM. Child sugar-sweetened beverages consumption in Texas. A report of the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition Project. UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin, Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. Published August 4, 2025.