

# The Facts on Fruit Juice

## Why Fruit Juice?

Keeping juice on hand is a good way to add some of the vitamins and energy that children need throughout the day. Juice is an easy way to get a serving of fruit, but eating fresh, canned or frozen fruits is better for the body. Here's what juice provides:

- **Vitamin C**
- **Carbohydrates**

Some juices have **Vitamin A**, which promotes healthy eyes and skin.

## How Much Juice?



Offer your child enough, but not too much:

- Ages 6 months to 1 year:  
1/4 cup or less 100% juice a day.
- Ages 1 to 5 years:  
1/4 to 1/2 cup 100% juice a day.



## Go Easy...

Even though juice is easy to give to your child, too much juice is not healthy. One hundred percent fruit juice can be a healthy part of a child's diet, *if* they don't drink too much. Here's why drinking too much juice can be a problem:

- Juice has calories. Too much juice may give your child more calories than he or she needs. That may add to them becoming overweight.
- If juice replaces milk or calcium-fortified soy beverages, your child may not get enough bone building calcium.
- Sipping juice a lot promotes tooth decay. Each ounce has 1 teaspoon of sugar.
- Diarrhea can become a problem when children drink too much juice.
- Children who drink too much juice "fill up" on it and don't eat well at meals and snacks.

## What Can I Give My Child to Drink Besides Juice?

- **Milk:** Children need 2-3 cups of milk a day.
- **Water:** Try cold tap water in a sports bottle or sparkling waters with no added sugars.
- **Set a good example.** Your children will eat what you eat and drink what you drink. Drink plenty of water...it's good for YOU too!

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## Why Does WIC Give Juice?

WIC fruit juices provide at least 120% of the United States Recommended Dietary Allowance (USRDA) for vitamin C per serving and some are also a good source of folate. WIC fruit juices are all 100% real fruit juice and do not have added sugar.

## What Are The Benefits To Limiting Juice?

- Children eat better at meal and snack time when they have not been sipping on juice. Less wasted food means you save money.
- Your children will eat well and grow well when they don't fill up on juice.
- Some parents say children in diapers are easier to potty train when they drink less juice.
- Clean up will be easier. No more sticky floors, tables, and counters.

## How Can You Encourage Good Juice Habits?

- Limit juice to suggested amounts for your child's age. These amounts are listed on the front of this handout
- Give juice in a cup only, not a bottle.
- Offer fruit juice instead of other sweetened drinks like Kool-Aid, soda, sports drinks or other juice-type beverages.
- Put juice in a container that children can't see through and put it in the back of the fridge.
- Offer water as a beverage between meals.
- Dilute juice with equal parts water.

**Mix juice** with other foods like this juice-banana smoothie to boost nutrition.

Blend together:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 ripe banana
- 1/2 cup fruit juice
- 1-2 ice cubes or  
1/2 cup crushed ice

Makes 2 servings



Adapted from *Nibbles for Health*  
Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children,  
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service





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