



# Parents & Caregivers

## Choosing Healthy Beverages for Your Family

### Serve healthy beverages to children.

- ◆ **Water.** It's free and you can encourage kids to drink as much as they want!
- ◆ **Milk.** It's a great source of calcium, protein, and Vitamin D for growing bodies. If kids don't like plain milk, flavor it lightly or add to food like tomato soup, oatmeal, or fruit smoothies.
  - ⇒ For kids younger than 2, choose whole or 2% milk, plain.
  - ⇒ For kids 2 years and older, choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk, plain.
- ◆ **100% juice.** A ½ cup of 100% juice can provide vitamins and minerals. But, don't let labels deceive you. Fruit "drinks" such as Sunny Delight are not fruit juice. Always look for drinks labeled 100% juice. Even 100% fruit juice has sugar – which is why water should be first for your thirst!
- ◆ **Skip sports and energy drinks.** Sports drinks are expensive and unnecessary. Water is the best drink for active kids – keep water on hand before, during, and after activities. Energy drinks contain excessive caffeine that is unsafe and unhealthy for children and youth.
- ◆ **Avoid artificial sweeteners.** These include saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, and sucralose. These are far more potent than table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup. Diet beverages, such as diet soda, and other drinks with artificial sweeteners are not recommended for children, especially those under 14 years old.

### Adopt Healthy Practices with Children.

- ◆ **Surround kids with water.** Put a pitcher of water on the table during meals, and keep water close to the bottom of the fridge and encourage kids to help themselves. Give kids a reusable water bottle!
- ◆ **Make water fun and flavorful.** Use novelty ice trays, fun glasses, or silly straws. Let kids pick their favorite fruits and create their own infused water recipes.
- ◆ **Drink smaller portions.** If serving sugary drinks, use smaller cups or share the beverage. If serving 100% juice, dilute with water or seltzer for a tasty treat.
- ◆ **Set reasonable limits.** You're the boss. Set a limit you are comfortable with and stick to it. For example: one sugary drink per week, just on weekends, or only on special occasions.
- ◆ **Stay strong.** Adopt "one-liners" you can use when children complain or beg for sugary drinks. For example: "In our family, we serve milk and water at meals."
- ◆ **Show by example.** Be a positive role model by drinking water and other healthy beverages.
- ◆ **Get everyone on the same page.** Ask your children's caregivers to serve healthier drinks as well.
- ◆ **Have a conversation.** Talk to your kids about sugary drinks and why it's important to limit them. Remind them that their body needs the good things in water and milk to build strong bones and teeth.

For more information visit  
[www.iHeartWaterNC.com](http://www.iHeartWaterNC.com)

