

The Best Drinks for Young Children



The best drinks for children under age 1 are human milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula. The best drinks for children older than age 1 are water and milk.

BEST CHOICES

Water

- **0-6 months:** No water needed
- **6-12 months:** No more than 4-8 ounces a day during mealtimes.
 - Water should not replace any amount of human milk or formula.
- **1-3 years:** 8-32 ounces a day, depending on milk consumption.
- **4-5 years:** 12-40 ounces a day, depending on milk consumption.

Plain, Pasteurized Milk

- **0-12 months:** No milk needed
- **12-24 months:** 16-24 ounces plain, pasteurized whole milk is (depending on solid food consumption a day).
 - Reduced-fat (2%) or low-fat (1%) milk may be considered, if your child's doctor says it is ok.
- **2-3 years:** up to 16 ounces a day of plain, pasteurized fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- **4-5 years:** up to 20 ounces a day plain, pasteurized fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Talk with your child's doctor before serving any plant-based milk substitutes.

OCCASIONAL CHOICE

100% Juice

This includes 100% fruit and vegetable juice blends.

- **0-12 months:** No juice needed
- **1-3 years:** No more than 4 ounces of 100% juice a day
- **4-5 years:** No more than 4 to 6 ounces of 100% juice a day

Juice is best as a treat once in awhile

- Juice often has as much sugar as soda or other sweetened drinks.
- Fruit juice offers no health benefits over whole fruit which provides fiber and can help children feel full.
- Too much juice for children, makes it more likely to have obesity, diarrhea, gas, and cavities.

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSBs)

- **0-5 years:** no sugar-sweetened drinks
- **Examples of SSBs:** soft drinks, soda, fruit or juice drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, fruitades, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and sweetened coffee and tea.
- SSBs put the most added sugars in children's diets. Fruit-flavored drinks (for example: fruitades, fruit cocktails, fruit punch) are the ones that children drink the most.