

10 Things Parents Should Know About Sugary Drinks



1. What are sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks are beverages with added sugars, such as non-diet sodas (or “pop”), energy drinks, sports drinks, sweetened fruit drinks, and sweetened coffees and teas.

2. How much sugar do they really have?

On average, a 20-ounce bottle of soda has more than 16 teaspoons of sugar and 240 calories. This is double the total amount of added sugar allowed for an entire day based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

3. What about sports drinks and energy drinks?

Energy drinks and sports drinks make up a growing part of the beverage market, and can contain as much sugar as soda. In a clinical report, the American Academy of Pediatrics concluded that energy drinks should never be consumed by children or adolescents and routine consumption of sports drinks should be avoided.

4. How many sugary drinks are our kids drinking?

In King County, nearly one in three high school students drink soda daily, and about 8,000 high school students drink two or more sodas per day. These numbers don't include the growing number of sports drinks, fruit drinks, vitamin waters and energy drinks that are so popular among kids.

5. If my child drinks two 20-ounce sodas per day, how much sugar is he drinking?

A person who drinks two 20-ounce regular colas per day consumes 4.7 cups of sugar per week — or 243 cups of sugar per year — from soda alone.

6. Do sugary drinks harm kids' teeth?

Consumption of sugary drinks by young children under the age of 5 is associated with an 80-120% increased risk of cavities. Consumption of energy drinks and sports drinks, which are highly acidic, irreversibly damages teeth through the erosion of tooth enamel.

7. What are the other health effects of drinking too many sugary drinks?

The consumption of sugary drinks has been linked to risks for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and cavities. For children and youth, an increase of one serving of sugary drinks per day increases the odds of being obese by 60%.

8. Is obesity a problem in King County?

In King County, one in five children in middle and high school are overweight or obese, and over half of King County adults are either overweight or obese. These rates are even higher in low income communities and communities of color.

9. Is it ok for my kids to have diet sodas?

Although diet beverages can provide calorie savings if substituted for high-calorie sugary drinks, they often have high acid content that can harm teeth. And for children, they have the potential to displace milk and other healthier options, including water.

10. Why single out sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks are different from other foods in that they are consumed in massive quantities, have no nutritional value, and are clearly linked to obesity. Additionally, unlike other foods with sugar, sugary drinks don't make us feel full.

