

# Building Blocks

Newsletter Promoting Children's Health from the Anne Arundel County Department of Health

## Be Sweet Without Added Sugar

The sugars or sweeteners added to food and drinks add to total calories, but provide no vitamins or minerals on their own. Allowing children to consume food and drinks with too many added sugars can fill them up without supplying the nutrients their growing bodies need.

Consumption of too much added sugar has been linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity and tooth decay. Use the following information for tips to reduce added sugars in your home to support healthy habits.

### Where Is the Added Sugar Coming From?

According to the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 47 percent of added sugars consumed by Americans 2 years of age and older come from sugar-sweetened beverages like sodas, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee and tea, energy drinks and flavored waters. Snacks and sweets make up 31 percent of added sugars.

### Be a Sugar Sleuth

Added sugars and sweeteners sneak into our food disguised with many different names. Check the ingredient list for these commonly found names for sugar: fruit juice concentrate, evaporated cane juice, malt syrup, sucrose, dextrose, fructose, high fructose corn syrup and corn sweetener.

Healthy Consumer Tips:

- When buying canned fruit, look at the ingredients and choose varieties that have been canned in water or their own juice, instead of syrup.
- Yogurt is made up of natural lactose sugars but also tends to be sweetened with added sugars to improve taste. Look for yogurt with no added sugars and sweeten it naturally with fruit.
- Dried cereals, especially cereals directly marketed to kids, tend to boast of their content of whole grains, but are often loaded with added sugars. Choose whole grain cereals with little or no added sugar.
- Don't confuse 100 percent fruit juice with fruit drinks which have added sugars and limited or no vitamins and minerals. Make sure the juices you are serving your kids say "100% juice" on the label.



The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting consumption of added sugars to less than 10% of daily calories. For the average 2,000 calorie diet, this means limiting calories from added sugars to 200 calories per day.



## Is Sugar to Blame for Type 2 Diabetes?

You may have heard that eating and drinking too much sugar causes diabetes. The answer to this is complicated. Research has shown that the consumption of sugary drinks is linked to type 2 diabetes. Consuming too many calories from any source contributes to weight gain, and being overweight increases your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Consuming too many calories from sugar, especially in beverages, is easy because they taste good and do not make us feel full. It's okay to enjoy food and drinks that contain sugar, as long as you are being mindful of the amount that you are consuming.

## Children and Type 2 Diabetes



Type 2 diabetes is a disease that makes it difficult for the body to turn food into energy. While the onset of type 2 diabetes has mostly been associated with adults in the past, the condition has increased in youth in recent years.

Children more at risk for developing type 2 diabetes:

- Are overweight and not physically active.
- Have a close relative that has type 2 diabetes.
- Are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Asian/Pacific Islander.

Children and adults can reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by eating healthy, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight. It is important that children learn healthy habits today to empower them to make healthy choices in the future.

For more information about diabetes, visit [www.Diabetes.org](http://www.Diabetes.org) and [www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov).

The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

## Be a Healthy Role Model

Children copy what they see adults doing, so it is essential to make healthy choices in front of your impressionable little ones. Being a healthy role model includes providing healthy snacks and opportunities to be active and practice healthy habits.

Examples of being a healthy role model:

- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks.
- Snacking on fruit and veggies.
- Eating with your kids and even trying new foods with them.
- Participating in active games with your kids.
- Always washing your hands.

Being a healthy role model is not only good for your children, but it is also good for you!



Check out the resources below for more information on creating a healthy environment at home.

[www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)  
[www.HealthyKidsHealthyFuture.org](http://www.HealthyKidsHealthyFuture.org)  
[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)  
[www.BetterBeverageFinder.org](http://www.BetterBeverageFinder.org)

# Learn To Live

Anne Arundel County Department of Health

[www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org](http://www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org)  
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