

Water, Juice and Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Findings from the Texas Child Feeding Study¹

How much sugar are Texas children (ages 1-5) drinking?

Background

As of 2004, U.S. children ages 2 to 5 consumed 10-15% of their total calories from sugar-sweetened beverages and 100% fruit juices.²

Soda and sugar-sweetened beverages are calorie-dense and provide little nutritional value to a child's diet.

A 12-ounce can of soda or juice contains 9-12 teaspoons of sugar.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children drink no more than 4-6 ounces of 100% juice daily.³

What did we ask?

- Does your child drink water daily?
- Does your child drink 100% fruit juice daily?
- About how much 100% fruit juice does your child drink each day?
- How many times in the past week did your child drink regular (non-diet) soda and fruit drinks (such as Sunny Delight, Kool-Aid)?

What did we learn? In this sample:

Water Intake

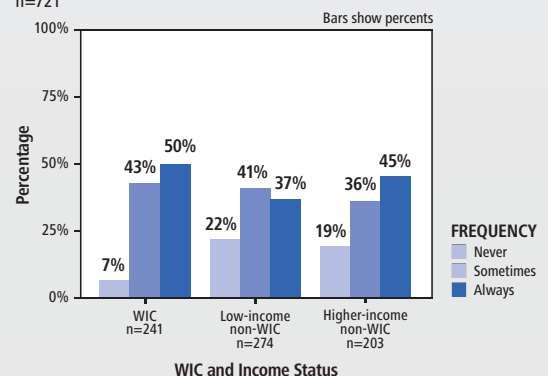
- One in five children (ages 1-5) do not drink water daily.
 - We found no differences among WIC, low-income non-WIC and higher-income non-WIC groups.

Juice Intake

- In this sample, which children were most likely to drink juice daily? See Figure 1.
 - Children on WIC were more likely to drink juice daily compared to children not on WIC.
- For all children who drink juice, the average juice intake is 8.6 ounces per day, about 50% more than the recommended maximum.
 - We found no differences among WIC, low-income non-WIC and higher-income non-WIC groups.
 - Within WIC, we found no difference in juice intake by age of child, ethnicity or main language spoken at home.

Continues on back.

Figure 1.
HOW OFTEN DO CHILDREN DRINK JUICE DAILY?
n=721



¹ Results from the Texas Child Feeding Study, conducted by the University of Texas at Austin Nutrition Education Team, in conjunction with the Texas Dept. of State Health Service. Seven hundred and twenty-one (721) Texas households were surveyed. Households had at least one child between the ages of 1 and 5 years and were grouped into the following categories WIC households (n=241); low-income, non-WIC households (n=274); middle to high-income households (n=203). For more information on the study, contact Shellie Shores at: shellie.shores@dshs.state.tx.us.

² Source: Wang YC, Bleich SN, and Gortmaker SL. (2008). *Increasing Caloric Contribution From Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and 100% Fruit Juices Among US Children and Adolescents, 1988-2004*. Pediatrics; 121: e1604-e1614.

³ American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Nutrition (2001). *The Use and Misuse of Fruit Juice in Pediatrics*. Pediatrics; 107(5):1210-1213.



What did we learn? (continued)

Juice Intake (continued)

- **How was knowledge about juice intake associated with actual juice intake?** See Figure 2.
 - 50% of respondents knew the recommended maximum amount of juice (4-6 oz.) for children.
 - We found no differences among WIC, low-income non-WIC and higher-income non-WIC groups.
 - On average, children drink more than the recommended amount of juice. However, parental awareness of the recommended juice intake (4-6 oz.) was associated with slightly reduced juice intake.

Soda and Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake

- **In this sample, how often do children drink sugar-sweetened beverages such as regular soda, Sunny Delight or Kool Aid?** See Figure 3.
 - About one quarter (23%) of children had drunk 7 or more sugar-sweetened beverages in the previous week (or at least one per day). Another quarter (23%) had not drunk any SSBs in the previous week.
 - We found no differences among WIC, low-income non-WIC and higher-income non-WIC groups.

Implications for WIC Nutrition Educators

- The findings on juice intake support the change to the WIC food package reducing the amount of juice for children.
- 100% fruit juice can have as much sugar as soda. Continue to reinforce the AAP recommendation of 4 to 6 ounces of juice, especially for overweight children.
- Encourage parents to offer water first when children are thirsty.
- Promote the benefits of reducing juice and sugar-sweetened beverage intake. Benefits may include saving money and avoiding tooth decay.
- Give parents visual cues such as Zobey magnets or a lined cup as reminders of recommended liquid amounts.

Figure 2.
KNOWLEDGE VS. BEHAVIOR: JUICE INTAKE
n=721

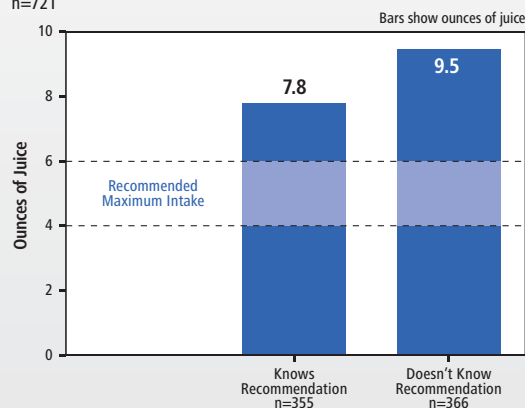
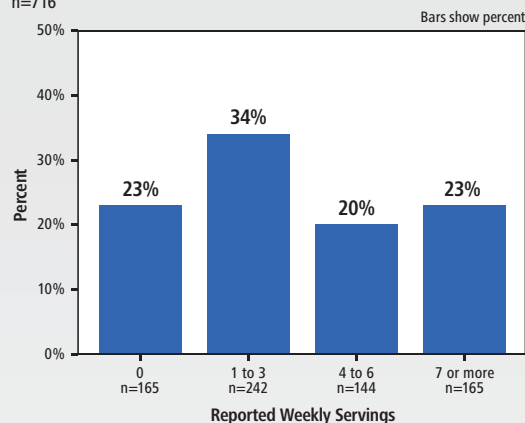


Figure 3.
WEEKLY INTAKE OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGE
n=716



For more information about this study series, please visit:

www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/nut/riskreport-nut.shtm

