

Drinks for your toddler or preschooler

Reviewed by SickKids Staff | Last updated: September 27th 2013

Find out what drinks to offer your toddler or preschooler as they adjust to solid foods.

Key points

- Once your child turns one, limit their milk intake to 500 mL (two cups).
- Once your child turns two, switch them from full-fat milk to 2% or 1% milk.
- Only offer water when the weather is hot or your child is very active.
- Offer diluted fruit juice as a special treat and avoid serving your child soft drinks.

Solid foods become an essential part of your child's diet as they enter the toddler and preschooler years. To ensure your child does not fill up on fluids before a meal, it is important to regulate their milk intake and make smart choices about other drinks.

Milk

Offer full-fat milk (3.25%, homogenized) with each meal up until the age of two. Once your child turns two years old, switch them to 2% or 1% milk. Wait until your child is at least five years old before offering skim (non-fat) milk.

Once children are over the age of one, limit their milk intake to a maximum of 16 ounces (two cups, or 500 mL) a day. Children who drink too much milk become full and do not have room for healthy food. These children are then at risk of iron deficiency [anemia](#). In addition, it is a good idea to offer milk in a "sippy cup" instead of a bottle for children aged 13 months and older. Children at this age who take from a sippy cup are less likely to drink too much milk.

Water

Other than milk, water is the best drink to give your toddler or preschooler. Offer water more often when the weather is hot or when your child is very active to help them quench their thirst.

Juice

Toddlers and preschoolers enjoy the sweet taste of juice. Try to avoid juice except as a special treat. If you do offer juice, dilute it with water so that it has less sugar and fewer calories.

Other drinks

Avoid serving soft drinks (pop) and fruit punch to your child. These drinks are full of sugar and may also curb your child's appetite because they leave less room for healthy meals and snacks. Avoid any drink that contains [caffeine](#) such as tea or soft drinks.

Please visit [AboutKidsHealth.ca](https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca) for more child health information.

©2024 The Hospital for Sick Children