

Simple Shifts to Better Beverages

What kids drink counts. Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda and fruit-flavored drinks provide only extra calories and few, if any, nutrients. With many children struggling to meet their nutritional needs,* shifting to naturally nutrient-dense beverages is key.

Food pattern modeling shows that shifting from common sugar-sweetened beverages to nutrient-dense beverages in daily food choices—including milk, Greek Yogurt drinks, and 100% juice†—helps young children (2-5 years) achieve better diets. These simple shifts help kids boost intakes of under-consumed nutrients and get the essential components they need for a healthy eating pattern, like calcium, potassium, and natural high-quality protein—all while keeping sugars in check.

Before Shift

Simple Shift

Difference

2 graham crackers
4 oz. fruit-flavored drink



2 graham crackers
4 oz. 100% apple juice†



magnesium +5 mg
potassium +79 g
sugar -7 g

½ tuna sandwich
¼ cup applesauce
4 oz. fruit punch



½ tuna sandwich
¼ cup applesauce
4 oz. Greek Yogurt drink



calcium +87 mg
potassium +136 mg
protein +5 g
sugar -4 g

8 vanilla wafers
4 oz. lemonade



5.3 oz. non-Greek yogurt
4 oz. water



calcium +138 mg
potassium +154 mg
protein +9 g
sugar -8 g

⅓ cup spaghetti + sauce
½ roll
¼ cup green beans
4 oz. soda



⅓ cup spaghetti + sauce
½ roll
¼ cup green beans
4 oz. non-fat chocolate milk



calcium +143 mg
vitamin D +1 mcg
protein +4 g
sugar -1 g

1 ice cream sandwich



5.3 oz. Vanilla Blended
Greek Yogurt
¼ cup sliced strawberries



calcium +97 mg
potassium +198 mg
protein +10 g
sugar -2 g

* Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Appendix E-2.1: Usual Intake Distributions, 2007-2010, By Age/Gender Groups. USDA, HHS. 2015.

† According to the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 100% juice is a nutrient-dense beverage and can count towards daily fruit servings. However, 100% juice should make up only half of the daily fruit recommendation, or ½-¾ cups a day for children 2-5 years.