

Diet and Dental Caries: Foundational Articles and Consensus Recommendations, 2021

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IAPD Consensus Recommendations

Consumption of free sugars (i.e., sugars added to food and beverages and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates), are of critical importance to the development of dental caries in children, as well as risk of future cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. Evidence from cohort studies show that the age at which sugar is introduced to a child and the frequency of its consumption are the critical factors regarding dental caries risk. Additionally, consumption of sweetened foods and drinks in the first year of life are strongly associated with the incidence of caries in subsequent years.

1. To reduce dental caries risk, sugar intake should be less than 5% of energy intake (less than 16 grams of sugar per day for children, aged 4-8. To avoid the risk of obesity and cardiovascular disease, intake of sugar in foods and drinks should be avoided for children under 2-years and should be limited to less

than 25 grams for older children.

2. Breast feeding in infancy may protect against dental caries, but if it continues after 12 months it may increase the risk of caries.

3. Baby bottles or closed containers should not be used to feed children sugar containing beverages. To avoid feeding throughout the night, bottles should not be left in the crib.

4. Fruit juices have little nutritional benefits and are not recommended for children under age 1. For children 1-3 years of age, the intake of juice should be limited to no more than 120 ml per day; for children 4-6 years of age, no more than 180 ml per day.

5. Dental professionals need to become engaged in advocacy efforts to reduce the amount and high frequency of intake of foods and beverages containing sugar.