

Diet and Dental Caries: Foundational Articles and Recommendations

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Background

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 the risk of future cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. Evidence from cohort studies shows

that the age at which sugar is introduced to a child and the frequency of its consumption are critical factors regarding dental caries risk. Additionally, consumption of sweetened foods and drinks in the first year of life is strongly associated with the incidence of caries in subsequent years.

IAPD Recommendations

1. According to the WHO Committee for Nutrition Guideline, to reduce dental caries risk, sugar intake should be less than 5 percent of energy intake (less than 16 grams of sugar (4 teaspoons) per day for children, aged 4-8.

Consensus-based recommendation › Global agreement 89%

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

Consensus-based recommendation › Global agreement 89%

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

Consensus-based statement › Global agreement 89%

4. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, fruit juices have few 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.

Consensus-based recommendation › Global agreement 83%

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.

Consensus-based statement › Global agreement 100%