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Study Links Juice, Chubby Children

Sweet drinks -- whether Kool-Aid with sugar or all-natural apple juice -- seem to raise the risk of pudgy preschoolers getting fatter, new research suggests.

That may come as a surprise to parents who pride themselves on seeking out fruit drinks with no added sugar.

"Juice is definitely a part of this," said lead researcher Jean Welsh of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While fruit juice does have vitamins, nutritionists say it's inferior to fresh fruit. The new U.S. dietary guidelines, for example, urge consumers away from juice, suggesting they eat whole fruit instead. The bottom line, though, is that "children need very few calories in their day," Welsh said. "Sweet drinks are a source of added sugar in the diet."

She said preschoolers were better off snacking on fruit or drinking water or milk.

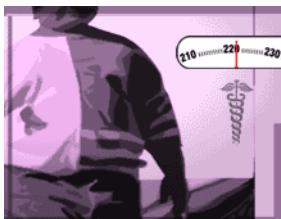
Welsh's research, published in the February issue of *Pediatrics*, found that for 3- and 4-year-olds already on the heavy side, drinking something sweet once or twice a day doubled their risk of becoming seriously overweight a year later. The sweet drinks seemed to have little effect, however, on children of normal weight.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting preschoolers to 4 to 6 ounces of juice per day. Some parents and schools are paying attention.

One Chicago Head Start program banned juice last year as part of an anti-obesity effort after finding that one out of five of its stu-

dents was obese.

Monica Dillion, community health nurse for the Howard Area Family Center, said the preschool also added more fruits and vegetables to meals and more exercise to the daily schedule. The preschool has never served soft drinks. The juice ban drew no complaints, Dillion said. "The kids didn't notice at all."



The Pediatrics study followed 10,904 Missouri children in a nutrition program for low-income families. Researchers looked at the effect of sweet drinks in three groups: normal and underweight children, those at risk of becoming

overweight, and those who already were overweight.

The researchers compared the children's heights and weights, approximately one year apart. They also looked at parents' reports of what their children ate and drank during a four-week period at the beginning of the first year. Fruit drinks like Kool-Aid and Hi-C were included as sweet drinks, along with juice and soda.

The link between sweet drinks and being overweight showed up for all three weight categories, although it wasn't statistically significant for the normal and underweight children. Taking into account other differences, such as ethnicity, birth weight and a high-fat diet, didn't erase the effect of sweet drinks. The children in the study drank, on average, more fruit juice than soft drinks or sweetened fruit drinks.

Sweet drinks are high in calories and low in fiber. Nutritionists believe that calorie-dense, low-fiber foods may lead to overweight.

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February 8, 2005

Harvest Blend Regular

- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Romaine Lettuce
- White Garlic
- Cucumber
- Yellow Onions
- Jewell Sweet Potatoes
- Green Bell Pepper
- Zutano Avocado
- Roma Tomatoes
- Cameo Apples
- Arizona Sweet Oranges
- Bananas
- Kent Mango
- Anjou Pears

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

The OO Potluck Picnic!



Mark your calendars!

The first annual Orlando Organics potluck picnic will be held **Saturday, February 19th at Lakemont Park** at the corner of Phelps and Palmer in Winter Park. (It's not too far from the intersection of 436 & Aloma.)

We'll start meeting up at **10:00 am** so that the kids can play. Everyone is invited to bring a favorite dish, anything from appetizers to desserts, to share with each other. (If possible, please also bring a recipe card that shows ingredients, so that our friends with dietary restrictions can make informed choices.)

If you have any questions, let us know. See you there!

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ing because those foods are quickly consumed but less filling than foods higher in fiber.

The authors suggest that limiting sweet drinks may help solve the growing problem of childhood obesity. One in five American children is overweight, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The study defined at-risk children as those whose size put them in the 85th to 95th percentile in growth charts. A child in the 85th percentile would be heavier than 85 percent of children of the

same gender and age.

Richard H. Adamson, vice president for scientific and technical affairs at the American Beverage Association, questioned the study's methods, saying it didn't take into account television viewing, overweight parents and the children's activity levels.

But Dr. Rebecca Unger, who evaluates overweight children in private practice and at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, said the study backs up what she sees in the real world. "We do see kids do well when we cut out juice," she said. "Sometimes that's all they need to do."

Recipes

Sweet Potato-Pepper Quesadillas

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped red onions
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, cooked, peeled and mashed
- 2 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 8 8-inch flour tortillas
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Monterey jack or cheddar cheese



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add green and red peppers, onions, jalapeno, garlic, oregano and chili powder; sauté 2 to 3 minutes or until onions are translucent. Place potatoes in a large mixing bowl and stir in pepper mixture. Add cilantro and salt; mix well. Place 1/2 cup potato mixture in center of 1 flour tortilla and spread evenly to within a half inch of the edge of the tortilla. Sprinkle with 3 tbsp shredded cheese. Place another tortilla over filling to form a "sandwich." Repeat with remaining tortillas and filling.

Line a baking pan with parchment paper or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Place tortillas on pan so that edges do not touch. Bake 5 to 8 minutes, or just until cheese melts. Remove from pan with a spatula and cut each quesadilla into wedges like pizza.

Shrimp, Green Pepper & Sweet Potato Stew

- 2 1/2 tsp cumin
- 3/4 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 3/4 lb. medium shrimp, shelled, deveined and cut into 1" pieces
- 1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" chunks

- 3/4 cup chicken broth diluted with 3/4 cup water
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large green bell pepper, diced
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

In small bowl, combine cumin, coriander, ginger, black pepper and cayenne. In medium bowl, toss shrimp with 1 tsp of spice mixture. Cover and let stand at room temperature.

In Dutch oven or casserole, combine remaining spice mixture, sweet potatoes, diluted chicken broth, onion and garlic. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer 1 cup of sweet potatoes to a bowl and mash. Stir mashed potatoes back into stew. Add shrimp and bell pepper, cover and cook, stirring once, until shrimp are just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and serve hot.

Baked Chicken with Tomatoes & Sweet Potatoes

- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 pounds unpeeled sweet potatoes, cut into 3/4" chunks
- 1 lb tomatoes, cut into 1/2" chunks
- 8 skinless bone-in chicken thighs (1 1/2 pounds total)
- 2 oz crumbled feta cheese

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spray 9" x 13" baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In small bowl or cup, mix lemon juice, oregano, pepper, salt, and 2 tbsp water. Arrange sweet potatoes and tomatoes in baking dish. Drizzle evenly with half of lemon juice mixture. Place chicken on top of vegetables and drizzle with remaining lemon juice mixture. Cover with foil and bake 45 minutes, occasionally spooning pan juices over chicken and vegetables.

Uncover and bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender. Crumble feta evenly over top of chicken and vegetables and bake three to four minutes longer, or until cheese is melted.