

WHY FRUIT JUICE?

FOR CHILDREN
(a resource for parents)



WE ALL KNOW THAT IT'S HEALTHY TO EAT MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, BUT WHAT ABOUT FRUIT JUICE?

Experts agree that children can benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables as they provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. They are also a healthier alternative to sweet or savoury snacks. While fruit juice was valued in the past for its vitamin C content, the spotlight on sugar has made many parents feel unsure about whether to offer it to their children. Here, we look at the facts.

NUTRIENTS FOR THE BODY

100% fruit juice, such as orange juice, contains a wide range of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, folate and potassium.

- » Folate contributes to normal blood formation and the normal function of the immune system.
- » Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation for normal bones, skin and teeth as well as to the normal function of the immune system.
- » Potassium contributes to normal muscle function and to the maintenance of normal blood pressure.

FRUIT JUICE MYTHS

We read a lot about fruit juice on the internet or social media, but some things are not true!

- » 100% fruit juice is not 'just sugary water'. It contains all the vitamins and minerals found in the whole fruits used to make it. A small glass of 150 ml provides about 60 calories.
- » 100% fruit juice does not contain any added sugar, preservatives or artificial sweeteners.
- » 100% fruit juice is fine for teeth if children drink it at mealtimes, have good oral hygiene and stick to one small glass a day. The *American Academy of Pediatrics* advises 100-150 ml per day for children aged 1-6 years.

FRUIT JUICE COMPLEMENTS FRUIT

Whole fruit and vegetables are the best option but are not always easy to eat on the go. Most children eat too few fruits and vegetables, especially preschool children who may be picky eaters, or food neophobic. If your child refuses to eat vegetables and/or fruits, juices can be a useful alternative to provide vitamins and minerals, and are a complement to usual fruit intake. According to the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, babies can be offered fruit juice after 12 months of age.

WHAT ABOUT SUGAR?

Many children eat too much sugar and could reduce it by cutting down on sweetened soft drinks, confectionery, biscuits, cakes and desserts. One small glass of 100% fruit juice contains 13 g of natural sugar, but also provides vitamins, minerals and a portion of fruit, making it a useful addition to the diet.

It is better for dental health if juice is drunk with meals rather than between meals. Wait 15 minutes after consumption before brushing teeth and avoid giving fruit juice in a bottle or at bedtime. On balance, a small glass of 100% fruit juice has many more positives than negatives.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is reliable and has been verified. The information is intended for health care professionals to deliver to their patients and clients, and does not constitute dietary advice in itself.

FACT

100% fruit juice means that nothing extra has been added or taken away. It's simply a drink made by squeezing fruit. There are no preservatives, added sugars, sweeteners or artificial ingredients. Simply pure juice!

