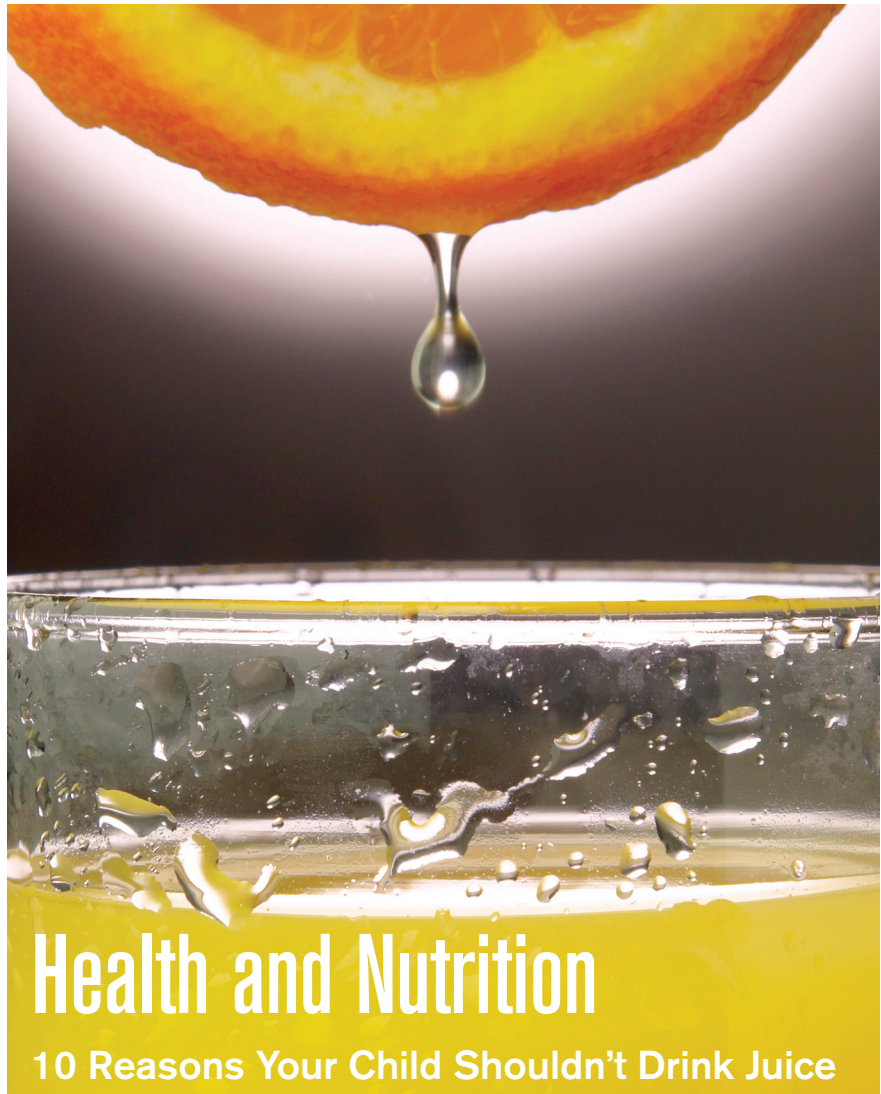




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Dr. JENN, a licensed psychotherapist in private practice, is the author of *The A to Z Guide to Raising Happy Confident Kids* and *SuperBaby: The 12 Ways Parents Can Give Their Child a Head Start in the First Three Years*. She has appeared as a psychological expert on hundreds of television shows and hosts a radio show on Sirius XM. Dr. Jenn lives in Los Angeles with her husband and children. www.DoctorJenn.com.



Health and Nutrition

10 Reasons Your Child Shouldn't Drink Juice

by Dr. JENN BERMAN

Most parents wouldn't give their child a glass of soda, much less a baby bottle filled with it. But many parents give their young children juice every day, despite reports that juice is not much different than soda. A growing body of evidence links sweet drinks, even 100 percent, all-natural, no-sugar-added juice, to a host of child health concerns from obesity to diabetes to tooth decay.

Concerned about these issues, in 2001 the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued guidelines saying fruit juice should not be given to children younger than 6 months. Children age 1 to 6 should have no more than 4 to 6 ounces per day; children 7 to 18 years no more than 8 to 12 ounces per day. Despite these guidelines, 60 percent of one-year-olds drink an average of 11 ounces of day juice a day, two to three times more than recommended.

There is a misconception among parents that fruit juice offers good nutrition, or is a replacement for whole fruit. But according to the AAP, "Fruit juice offers no nutritional benefits over whole fruit." Furthermore, "excessive juice consumption may be associated with diarrhea, flatulence, abdominal distention, and tooth decay." When looking at juice and soda Dr. David Ludwig, an expert on pediatric obesity at Children's Hospital Boston says, "All of these beverages are largely the same. They are 100 percent sugar."

If those aren't good enough reasons to lay off the juice, consider these:

1. Obesity Risk

A 1997 study of preschool children who drank at least 12 ounces of juice per day were three and a half times more likely to exceed the 90th percentile for body mass index (BMI) qualifying them as overweight or obese. Each extra glass of juice per day equated to one extra pound of weight gain per year.

2. Pesticides

According to a report issued by The Environmental Working Group, some apples are so toxic that just one bite can deliver an unsafe dose of OPs (organophosphate insecticides) to a child under five. Conventional juice is no different. A two-year old child drinking non-organic apple juice may be exposed to as many as eighty different pesticides.

3. High in calories and sugar

One serving of juice contains the sugar from several pieces of fruit. A glass of apple juice has the fructose of six apples but none of the fiber and very little of the nutritional value. And, ounce for ounce, it contains more calories than soda.

4. Poor nutrition

Juice can replace more nutrient-dense foods in a child's diet, making children less likely to get the recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals. In very young children, too much juice cuts the appetite for nutritionally superior breast milk or formula. In older children it often supplements other foods, adding hundreds of excess calories.

5. Correlations to heart disease and type 2 Diabetes

According to a Los Angeles Times article entitled Nutrition Experts See Juice Glass as half Empty, UC Davis scientist Kimber Stanhope reports that the high levels of fructose found in juice (and soda) increases risk for heart disease and type 2 Diabetes because it is converted into fat by the liver more readily than glucose.

6. Cavities

Tooth decay in young children's baby teeth is on the rise and it is believed that the increased consumption of fruit juices is one of the culprits. According to Dr. Bruce Dye of the

National Center for Health Statistics, "When you have more decay in your baby teeth, there's a greater likelihood you'll have decay in your adult teeth."

7. Develops preference for sweeter foods

Children who drink sweet beverages like juice develop lifelong preferences for sweeter foods. A 2004 Dutch study found that children preferred sweeter drinks after

consuming a sugary drink for eight days. They also drank more of the drink as they acclimated to the sweet taste.

8. Prevents the body from regulating itself

Calories consumed in liquid form don't create the same feeling of satiation as those eaten in foods, which means those liquid calories aren't compensated for by eating less food.

9. Prevents kids from eating the real thing

Many parents give their children juice because they are not eating enough whole fruit. Unfortunately, giving juice does not give her the nutrients she needs, and it makes her less likely to eat fruit in the future. Studies show that it can take as many as 15 exposures to a new food before a child accepts it. Most parents are not that patient. In a large-scale study, researchers found that approximately 25 percent of parents gave up on a new food after only one or two tries and only six percent were willing to continue to try serving the food six to ten times. The more times children are exposed to a new food (yes, fruits and vegetables!) the more likely they are to try it and like it.

10. Develops bad habits.

The first three to five years set the stage for future eating habits. Teaching children to drink their calories, instead of eating them in nutrition dense foods makes it likely they will continue to do so into adulthood. It also makes it more likely the juice will be replaced by another sweetened drink like soda.

Conversely, kids who grow up drinking water become water drinkers throughout life. According to Dr. William Dietz, with the division of nutrition and physical activity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Parents need to be firm—thirst is satisfied with water, hunger with solid foods. Caloric beverages can blur that line."

