

Eliminate sweetened drinks, cut kids' sugar intake

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(HealthDay)—Looking for the quickest way to cut added sugar from

your kid's diet?

Eliminate sugar-sweetened drinks, a nutrition expert says.

Added sugar is a term used to describe any sugars that are added to foods or used in the processing and preparing foods or beverages. This includes sweeteners like sugar, fructose and honey.

"Children who start consuming a lot of added sugar, particularly in beverages at an early age, are more likely to develop all the things that contribute to [heart disease](#), such as high triglycerides, diabetes and excess weight, all of which increase your chances of developing heart disease," said Jo Ann Carson. She is a professor of clinical nutrition at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center School of Health Professions.

Children younger than 2 should not have any added sugars in their diet. Young people between the ages of 2 and 18 should get no more than 25 grams of added sugar each day, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

"That's the equivalent of just six of those white sugar packets," Carson said in a center news release.

However, the average American child consumes closer to 80 grams of sugar a day. The best way for parents to curb their children's added sugar intake is to eliminate [sugary drinks](#), such as sodas, juices, [energy drinks](#) and [sports drinks](#), she advised.

There are more than 20 grams of sugar in just one 8-ounce glass of lemonade or sports drink, Carson explained. She recommends replacing these high-sugar beverages with water and low-fat milk to significantly reduce kids' overall sugar intake.

More information: The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides more information on [added sugars](#).

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