

# HEALTHY DRINKS. HEALTHY KIDS.

Research shows that what children drink from birth through age five has a big impact on their health – both now and for years to come. While every child is different, the nation’s leading health organizations agree that for most kids, the following recommendations can help to set children on a path for healthy growth and development. As always, consult with your health care provider about your child’s individual needs.

## ALL KIDS 5 AND UNDER

All kids 5 and under should avoid drinking flavored milks, toddler formulas, plant-based/non-dairy milks\*, caffeinated beverages and sugar- and low-calorie sweetened beverages, as these beverages can be big sources of added sugars in young children’s diets and provide no unique nutritional value.

## 0-6 MONTHS



Babies need only **breast milk** or **infant formula** to get enough fluids and proper nutrition.

## 6-12 MONTHS



In addition to **breast milk** or **infant formula**, offer a small amount of drinking **water** once solid foods are introduced to help babies get familiar with the taste – just a few sips at meal times is all it takes. It’s best for children under 1 not to drink juice. Even 100% fruit juice offers no nutritional benefits over whole fruit.

## 12-24 MONTHS



It’s time to add **whole milk**, which has many essential nutrients, along with plain drinking **water** for hydration. A small amount of juice is ok, but make sure it’s 100% fruit juice to avoid added sugar. Better yet, serve small pieces of real fruit, which are even healthier.

## 2-5 YEARS



**Milk** and **water** are the go-to beverages. Look for milks with less fat than whole milk, like skim (non-fat) or low-fat (1%). If you choose to serve 100% fruit juice, stick to a small amount, and remember adding water can make a little go a long way!

See the full guidelines and learn more at  
[HEALTHYDRINKSHEALTHYKIDS.ORG](https://www.healthydrinkshealthykids.org)

\*NOTES: Evidence indicates that, with the exception of fortified soy milk, many plant-based/non-dairy milk alternatives lack key nutrients found in cow’s milk. Our bodies may not absorb nutrients in these non-dairy milks as well as they can from regular milk. Unsweetened and fortified non-dairy milks may be a good choice if a child is allergic to dairy milk, lactose intolerant, or whose family has made specific dietary choices such as abstaining from animal products. Be sure to consult with your health care provider to choose the right milk substitute to ensure that your child is still getting adequate amounts of the key nutrients found in milk, such as protein, calcium, and vitamin D, which are essential for healthy growth and development.