

## CHOOSING DRINKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

**Water** Drinking water is the best way to quench thirst without getting the sugar and kilojoules found in sweetened drinks. Drinking water instead of sweetened drinks helps prevent dental problems and the Fluoride found in tap water also helps children develop strong teeth.

**Milk** Milk is a good source of Calcium and is important for the growth of strong bones and teeth.

- Reduced fat or lite milks should be encouraged for children over the age of two years. Reduced fat milks contain much the same nutrients as full-cream milks except they are lower in saturated fats and therefore in energy content.
- Children under two years of age should not drink reduced fat milks as they have higher energy requirements than older children.

**Fruit Juice** Fruit juice is often regarded as a healthy choice as it contains Vitamin C. However one small glass (125mls) of most juices provides a child's daily requirement for Vitamin C. More than this amount provides excess sugar and kilojoules that can contribute to weight gain. A piece of fruit is a better choice than juice as it provides fibre.

**Soft drinks, cordials and sports drinks** Regular soft drinks, cordials, sports drinks and flavoured mineral waters can contain large amounts of sugar and kilojoules. These drinks are not a necessary part of a healthy diet and should only be consumed occasionally – not everyday.

### Did you know?

- Children who regularly drink soft drink and other sweetened drinks are more likely to be overweight.
- 37% of children aged 2-4 drink one or more cups of soft drink each week, with over 22% drinking six or more cups a week.

### Ideas to encourage your child to drink more water

- Pack a water bottle whenever you go out.
- In summer, put a frozen water bottle in your child's lunch box.
- Have cold water available at all times at home instead of sweetened drinks.
- When participating in active play or sports, encourage your child to drink water rather than sports/energy drinks.
- If you already offer juices, sports energy drinks and cordials, gradually water them down until your child is happy to replace these with plain water.
- Use smaller glasses if you do offer sugary drinks for children and limit the number and serve size of sugary drinks they have.

### Remember:

- If you always offer sweetened drinks, children will be less likely to choose plain water.
- If you are going to offer your children sweetened drinks on occasions, healthier options are those drinks and waters with just a hint of sweetness (less than three grams of sugar per 100ml). These can be consumed in larger volumes (up to 500ml) to satisfy thirst without giving children excess sugar or a preference for strongly sweetened drinks.

