

# Whole Fruits, yes! Fruit Juice, no! Really? No Juice for Babies?

by Doug Puder, MD



The Nutrition Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics no longer recommends any fruit juice for babies before their first birthday! "Kids should eat their fruit, not drink it!"

Although those juice boxes are very convenient with their single serving box and attached straw, parents should consider skipping it for a number of reasons: They are sugary drinks which have been linked to more cavities in children's teeth, to obesity in some children, and can be a cause of diarrhea. By the way, those juice boxes are expensive!

Although some vitamins are present in fruit juice, it is mostly "natural" sugar water. It lacks fiber and protein critical for a child's growth. A small glass of juice has nearly three times the sugar of an entire piece of fruit. There is an additional concern of infection when parents give unpasteurized juice. We prescribe vitamins with fluoride for all of our Rockland County patients (and Orange County) starting at the age of six months. So the vitamins in juice add little.

These are the new recommendations of the AAP (and Clarkstown Pediatrics):

**Infants until  
12 months**

***Do not routinely give fruit juice to infants younger than 12 months since it offers no nutrition benefit at this age.***

**1 to 3  
Years**

***Limit fruit juice to 4 ounces per day (1/2 cup)  
Don't let your toddler carry a box/cup of juice all day***

**4 to 6  
Years**

***Limit fruit juice to 4 - 6 ounces per day (1/2-3/4 cup)  
Don't let your child carry a box/"sippy" cup of juice all day***

**7 to 18  
Years**

***Limit fruit juice to 8 ounces per day (1 cup)***



We encourage parents to give whole fruits several times a day to provide more fiber and be more filling to a child. One cup of whole fruit is recommended daily to age 3, one and a half to age seven and about two cups daily afterwards. A small apple, or one banana, or one orange give about one cup of fruit. For more detail, visit:

USDA **ChooseMyPlate.gov**  
United States Department of Agriculture

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