

# Drinking juice not associated with being overweight in children

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Children who drink 100-percent juice are no more likely to be overweight and may have a better overall nutrient intake than children who do not drink juice, according to a report in the June issue of Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

Increasing numbers of Americans, including children, are overweight or obese, according to background information in the article. Food-consumption patterns may play a role in children's weight gain. Drinking juice has been associated with overweight and obesity in some studies but not in others.

Theresa A. Nicklas, Dr.P.H., of Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, and colleagues analyzed data from a group of 3,618 children age 2 to 11 who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) between 1999 and 2002. During in-home interviews, the children were weighed and measured, and they or their parents reported the types of foods and drinks they consumed.

On average, the children drank 4.1 fluid ounces of juice per day, which contributed an average of 58 calories to their diet. There was no association between drinking juice and being overweight. Children who drank juice had significantly higher intakes of calories, carbohydrates, vitamins C and B6, potassium, riboflavin, magnesium, iron and folate and significantly lower intakes of total fat, saturated fat, discretionary fat and added sugar.

Children who drank juice also ate more whole fruit than those who did not drink juice. "It is not clear why some children drink more fruit juice and what the association is with increased intake of fruit in these individuals," the authors write. "Taste and availability are two generally recognized factors in increased intake of fruit and vegetables; usual food intake, subjective norms, parenting style and visual benefits of eating fruit and vegetables are others."

Overall, children drank less juice than the daily maximum amounts recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics—4 to 6 ounces for children 1 to 6 years old and 8 to 12 ounces for children and teens 7 to 18 years old. Children age 2 to 3 drank the most juice—an average of 6 ounces per day.

Source: JAMA and Archives Journals

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