

Script – Broadcast – Ditch the soda: Healthy hydration starts young

INTRO

It's no surprise that kids love sugary drinks. It's also no shock that a group of health organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the American Heart Association, have released [new recommendations](#) encouraging healthier hydration options for children.

The bottom line, according to experts, is kids and teenagers should drink water and cow's milk and stay clear of drinks that contain added sugar, artificial sweeteners and caffeine.

VO

Mohammad Soud, MD, a pediatrician with OSF HealthCare, says while the recommendations aren't new revelations, it's an important message to drive home.

Dr. Soud says caffeine drinks can cause high blood pressure, heart palpitations, anxiety, depression and interrupted sleep – all of which can affect academic performance. Sugar can also severely impact children's health, contributing to Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Perhaps the biggest surprise from the new recommendations might be that cow's milk is the choice over plant-based milk.

Cow's milk contains high-quality protein, essential amino acids and plenty of vitamin D, calcium, phosphorus and iodine, which are important for bone growth and brain development in children. But soy milk has been approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics as an alternative to cow's milk for children who have dairy allergies.

But it's unrealistic to think kids won't reach for something unhealthy from time to time. Dr. Soud's message to his patients and parents is simple — stick with water and cow's milk first. But on occasions like weekends or special events, it's OK to opt for a smoothie, fruit punch or a sports drink. Being flexible, he says, is the key.

(((SOT)))

Mohammad Soud, MD, pediatrician, OSF HealthCare

"I encourage parents to read labels with their kids and teach them how to read labels," says Dr. Soud. "Any drink that has high sugar, this is what I call a sometimes drink. This is not an everyday drink. I tell parents to be role models for their kids. So, when they are drinking water over soda, often kids mimic that behavior." (:24)

TAG

Water should be the go-to drink every day, says Dr. Soud. How much water, however, depends on the age, activities they participate in and the climate they live in.

Dr. Soud says establishing good hydrating habits will serve children and teens well into adulthood.