

Important Facts about Sugar and Hyperactivity

EXPERTS SEE **NO LINK** BETWEEN SUGAR AND HYPERACTIVITY IN KIDS

Despite some anecdotal reports, there's **no scientific evidence to link sugar intake to hyperactivity in kids**. Experts agree that sugar should be moderated in kids' diets, but they also agree that it does not need to be eliminated. Numerous health organizations agree, there's no link between sugar and hyperactivity.

What the Experts Say:

- According to the **American Dietetic Association**, "claims of an association between sugar and hyperactivity have not been supported, even in those children who, by report, are sensitive to sugar."
- According to the **American Academy of Family Physicians**, "no studies show that limiting or never eating foods that contain preservatives or sugar help" with treatment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

What the Research Says:

- There are often excitable situational factors, such as birthday parties or Halloween, accompanying high-sugar meals that lead to anecdotal reports on sugar and hyperactivity. However, research does not support the link.^{1,2} In fact, one study of children ages 6 to 10 (who were selected specifically because their parents believed they were particularly sensitive to sugar) **found no differences in the children's behavior when they ate higher-than-normal amounts of sugar**, compared to when they ate diets low in sugar.³

For additional school materials, visit milkdelivers.org/resources.

1. White JW, Wolraich M. Effect of sugar on behavior and mental performance. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 1995;62:242S-249S. 2. Wolraich ML, et al. The effect of sugar on behavior or cognition in children. A meta-analysis. *JAMA*. 1995;274:1617-1621. 3. Wolraich ML, et al. Effects of diets high in sucrose or aspartame on the behavior and cognitive performance of children. *N Engl J Med*. 1994;330:301-307. 4. Murphy MM, et al. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in U.S. children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2008; 108:631-639. 5. Johnson, RK, et al. The nutritional consequences of flavored milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2002;102:853-856. 6. NHANES (2003-2006), Ages 2-18 years. 7. ENVIRON International Corporation. School Milk: Fat Content Has Declined Dramatically since the Early 1990s. 2008. 8. Patterson J, Sidel M. The Removal of Flavored Milk in Schools Results in a Reduction in Total Milk Purchases in All Grades, K-12. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2009; 109(9): A97.

THE REAL STORY ON ADDED SUGAR AND FLAVORED MILK

Studies show that **children who drink flavored milk do not consume more added sugar in their diets**, but that they do drink more milk overall and meet more of their nutrient needs.^{4,5} Plus, as children move into adolescence their milk intake often decreases, while nutrient-void drinks with added sugars often increase. Offering lowfat flavored milk can be a good strategy to help prevent the switch.

The Experts' Opinion:

- Many leading health and nutrition organizations, including the **American Academy of Pediatrics**, **American Dietetic Association** and **American Heart Association**, agree that the small amount of added sugar in flavored milk is an acceptable trade-off for the nutrients gained.

Why Flavored Milk is Important for Student Nutrition:

- **Flavored milk contains the same nine essential nutrients** as white milk including three "nutrients of concern" lacking in children's diets, according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines—calcium, potassium and vitamin D.
- Flavored milk contributes just 3% of added sugars to kids' diets. Sodas and fruit drinks, on the other hand, account for close to half of the added sugar, delivering much less, if any nutrition in the process.⁶
- Children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutrient needs, do not consume more added sugar or fat, and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers.^{4,5}
- Lowfat chocolate milk is the most popular choice in schools and kids drink less milk (and get fewer nutrients) if it's taken away.^{7,8}



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