

Study Shows 98% of Children Under the Age of Two Consume Too Much Sugar

The majority of toddlers and babies eat too much added sugar. A recent study shows that 98% of toddlers and two-thirds of babies are consuming added sugars every day. The American Heart Association recommends that children under the age of 2 not have access to any added sugars. The lead author of the study, Dr. Kirsten Herrick, states that added sugars have negative effects on health, causing cavities, asthma, obesity, elevated blood pressure, and altered lipid profiles. She also states:

Whether these associations exist for even younger children hasn't been studied," she added. "The aim of this study was to focus on one aspect of diet – added sugars [and] consumption among US infants and toddlers – that could inform the dietary guidelines."

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Infants in the study of ages 6-11 months were commonly given added sugars from yogurt, baby snacks, and sweet baked goods. Children 12-23 months consumed fruit juice, candy, and sweet baked goods. Yogurt was the greatest source of sugar for infants, and fruit drinks supplied the highest level of added sugars for toddlers. Formula and breastmilk were not counted towards sugar intake. There was no difference found between gender, family income, or level of household education, but there was a difference in consumption by race. The average infant consumed a teaspoon of added sugars, while toddlers on average consumed 6 teaspoons. Non-Hispanic Asian toddlers were shown to consume the least amount of added sugars with an

average of 3.7 teaspoons a day while non-Hispanic black toddlers reported consuming the most added sugars with an average of 8.2 teaspoons a day.

Overall, sugar consumption among toddlers and infants has dropped the last 5 years. This is a beneficial thing, as sugar consumption at such a young age plays a large role in developing taste buds and eating patterns throughout life.

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