

4-H Beverage Guidelines

California 4-H: Engaging Youth in Living Well

For anyone who knows the 4-H pledge, “health” is a cornerstone of our organization. 4-H Healthy Living encompasses a holistic approach including physical, social and emotional health. The California 4-H Youth Development Program is focusing efforts on increasing healthy living opportunities and strengthening the presence of healthy living themes in existing programs, activities and curriculum.

Why beverage guidelines?

The percent of Americans—both children and adults—who are overweight or obese is staggering. Roughly two-thirds of adults are overweight and 32 percent of children and adolescents. Obesity is linked to serious health consequences such as heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, and more. All lines of scientific evidence indicate a strong link between sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and obesity. In recognition of this problem, California 4-H is committed to educating 4-H youth and their families about healthy habits and encouraging healthy options at 4-H events and activities.

How can we implement beverage guidelines?

Beverage guidelines feature criteria to determine which beverages are healthful choices to offer at a 4-H event, such as 4-H State Presentation Day or even a county council meeting. One approach to implementing guidelines is to increase options, such as always offering water and skim milk at 4-H club meetings. A second approach is to limit options, such as limiting the sales of sugar sweetened beverages at 4-H sponsored events.

Guidelines

Sugar-sweetened beverages are especially harmful to children. Every additional daily serving of soda increases a child’s risk for obesity by 60 percent. Young children who drink sugar-sweetened beverages between meals have more than double the risk of overweight compared to those who don’t. Additionally, 13 percent of teen calorie intake comes from soda. In support of healthy habits, 4-H events will feature healthier beverages for youth and their families, volunteers and staff.

Suggested – beverages without added sugars, such as:

- Juice containing 100% real fruit or vegetable juice
- Water
- “Light” lemonade
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Carbonate fruit juice
- Low-fat or non-fat milk

Discouraged – beverages that contain added sugar, such as:

- Regular soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Vitamin water
- Sports drinks
- Coffee drinks
- Sweetened iced tea



Healthy Living

University of California 4-H Youth Development Program
For more information, visit www.ca4h.org/Projects/HealthyLiving