



**American
Heart
Association®**

life is why™

Dear Family,

Bubble, fizz, ahhhh...when you have kids, it's tough to keep soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages out of your grocery cart. But think about this: **a child who drinks one or more cans of sugar-sweetened beverages a day is 55 percent more likely to be overweight than a child who drinks little or none.** Regular soda has lots of calories, no nutrients, and more sugar—about nine teaspoons per can—than your child's body needs. Sugary drinks—including regular sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, and juice drinks with added sugar—are also **linked to other health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and tooth decay.** Let's work together to teach about healthier beverage choices. Reach for water first. Milk and 100% fruit juice can also be good options, but remember that your drinking glass may have multiple servings. Encourage good nutrition both in and out of the classroom!

Sincerely,

teacher

Your child is a participant in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program. The AHA has five priority messages for your family:

Physical Activity

Healthy Eating

Sodium



**Sodas and Other
Sugary Drinks**

Tobacco/Smoking



It's sometimes better to show your kids rather than just tell them. Here are some great ways to demonstrate why you should limit sweetened beverages.

- **Show them the oh-so-gross syrupy sludge in sweetened beverages.** Pour a can of regular soda (or a sports drink or sweetened juice) into a pot. Bring the drink to a boil and, once most of the water from the drink has boiled away, carefully spoon out the thick, syrupy residue that remains. Yuck! Does your child really want to drink this?
- **Demonstrate the amount of sugar in some beverages.** Gather sugar packets and two glasses. Place a 20-ounce bottle of regular soda by one glass and fill the second glass with water. Have your child count out 22 packets of sugar, tear them open, and pour the sugar in the glass by the soda. Point out that there is no sugar in water. Which drink is the healthier option?
 - **Want a refreshing alternative?** Put 100% fruit juice in an ice tray, insert round toothpicks, and freeze. Then invite your child to enjoy this healthier mini ice pop!

Good to Know!

Diet soda doesn't have any calories, but it doesn't have any nutrients either. When you're thirsty, water is your best bet because there are no calories in water and your body needs plenty of it to function well. To learn more, go to the American Heart Association's website at heart.org/HealthierKids.