

Tips for Talking to Family Members about Protecting Your child from Sugary drinks

Your Voice is Important!

Sometimes family members like grandparents, uncles, aunts and others want to give children sodas and other sugary drinks even if parents don't approve. It's easy for parents to feel powerless and frustrated when family doesn't support the healthy choices they want for their children. Parents don't want to offend family or say "no", but they want their children to be healthy! What can parents do?



What you need to know:

- Grandparents may give sweets and sodas as a way to show their love for their grandchildren and give them a "treat" that they never used to get as a child themselves.
- Family members may not be aware of the severity of health problems associated with too much sugar. The harmful effects of sugar are not immediately noticeable, and it's easy to say "it won't happen to me". However:
 - Dental cavities are one of the most common chronic health problems in childhood. Tooth decay is associated with eating and drinking sugary foods and drinks.
 - Giving young children sugary drinks often leads to too much unhealthy weight gain that can last into adulthood and place them at higher risk of diabetes, asthma, heart disease and other sugar-related illnesses.
- It can take a long time to break a cycle. It's challenging to change others. You can start changing the future **now** by starting a conversation and being an example.

What you can do:

- Try using these messages to start a conversation with family members:
 - "We need to protect our little ones. We want them to grow up healthy and strong."
 - "I need your help in keeping my child healthy. The habits they're forming now will stick with them for a long time. I don't want them to have bad teeth or suffer from diabetes and other health problems when they're older."
 - "Thank you for caring so much about your grandchildren. What would really help them the most is if you gave them water. They love it when you spend time with them, play with them, sing to them, and teach them things."
 - "Years ago, our ancestors valued water and didn't have the option to buy soda. The traditional ways are healthy. If they didn't need sugar and soda then, we don't need it now."
- Find an ally in your family- someone who will help you speak up and be a positive influence.
- It is not necessary to completely cut out sugar forever. It is important to focus on drinking water and carefully *moderate* sugar intake as part of your regular routine.

Affirmation:

I choose to nourish my family with the healthiest drink and food choices possible. As a mother, I have my child(ren)'s best interest in mind. I can stand my ground and tell others, including family, that I don't want my children drinking or eating too much unhealthy, sugary food and drinks.