



# Countering sugary drink marketing

Fran Fleming, PhD

## Sugary drink reduction policy efforts

### Financial



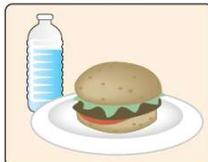
- Taxes
- Restrictions on price/volume promotions
- Healthy incentives on unsweetened beverages

### Advertising



- Warning labels on front of package
- Warning labels on advertising
- Advertising restrictions

### Defaults



- Healthy kids' beverages

### Availability



- Beverage procurement
- Healthy retail
- Restrictions to federal nutrition assistance programs

Campaigns can complement policies

Sugary drink marketing

Adapted from: Krieger, J., Bleich, S. N., Scarmo, S., & Ng, S. W. (2021). Sugar-sweetened beverage reduction policies: Progress and promise. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 42, 439-461.

# Today

## Options for countering sugary drink marketing

- Countermarketing
- Different from health education
- Promising strategy
- 2 case studies: campaigns to reduce parents' provision of sugary drinks to their children
- Engaging youth in countermarketing



# What is countermarketing?

## Reduce demand

Expose motives of producers

Shine light on/undermine marketing practices

Open Truth



Hammond D, Fong GT, Zanna MP, Thrasher JF, Borland R. 2006. Tobacco denormalization and industry beliefs among smokers from four countries. *Am. J. Prev. Med.* 31(3):225–32

# Food and beverage countermarketing interventions

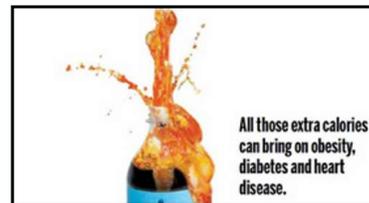
Intervention included elements on this theme: Yes, No, Insufficient information								
Health consequences	Industry manipulation of consumers	Appeals to emotions	Campaign tailored			Criticism of industry targeting by demographics	Campaign disparages existing brand	Campaign created its own brand
			By race/ethnicity	By gender	By age			
9/9	9/9	6/9	2/9	0/9	5/9	7/9	9/9	3/9

Palmedo, P. C., Dorfman, L., Garza, S., Murphy, E., & Freudenberg, N. (2017). Countermarketing alcohol and unhealthy food: an effective strategy for preventing noncommunicable diseases? Lessons from tobacco. *Annual review of public health*, 38, 119-144.



## Campaigns

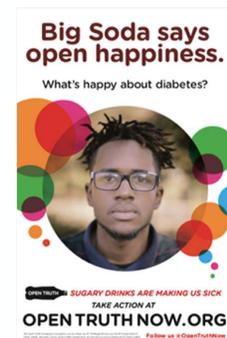
### Health education messages



### Countermarketing messages



Cigarettes or soda



# Anti-sugary drink campaigns

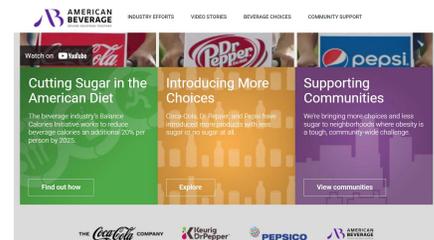
CAMPAIGN NAME	LOCATION	COUNTERMARKETING	HEALTH EDUCATION	EVALUATION
12 Spoonfuls	Mexico		*	
Choose Health LA!	Los Angeles		*	*
Cigarettes and Soda: Which One is the Health Hazard?	New York City	*		
Cut Back on Unhealthy Drinks	Colorado		*	*
Don't Drink Yourself Sick	New York City		*	
It Starts Here	Oregon		*	*
Kick the Can	California		*	
Live Sugarfree	New Jersey		*	*
LiveLighter	Australia		*	*
Pouring on the Pounds	New York City		*	*
Real Cost Campaign	Philadelphia	*		
Rethink Sugary Drinks	Australia		*	*
Rethink Your Drink	Oklahoma	*		*
Rethink Your Drink	Hawaii	*		*
Rethink Your Drink	Santa Clara		*	*
Rethink Your Drink	Seattle		*	
Sour Side of Sweet	New York City		*	
Sugar Packed	San Antonio		*	
Sugar Smarts	Boston		*	
The Open Truth Campaign	California	*		
Time for a Change	Philadelphia		*	*
Trenton Sugarfree	New Jersey		*	
Unsweetened	Maryland		*	
Why Sugar is Not So Sweet	Alaska		*	

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dC0DG8bTvLWrNfz0PPsFTDzTW6Jq4mPh/view>

# Benefits and challenges for sugary drink countermarketing

Reframe issue – does not blame individual  
 Question industry norms  
 Reach individuals and regulators  
 Naming names  
 Evidence messages work\*

Scale  
 Naming names  
 Not tobacco  
 Industry PR  
 Some drinks perceived as healthy



\*Dixon H, Scully M, Kelly B, Donovan R, Chapman K, Wakefield M. 2014. Counter-advertising may reduce parent's susceptibility to front-of-package promotions on unhealthy foods. *J. Nutr. Educ. Behav.* 46(6):476-74

Bryan, C. J., Yeager, D. S., & Hinojosa, C. P. (2019). A values-alignment intervention protects adolescents from the effects of food marketing. *Nature human behaviour*, 3(6), 596-603.  
<https://www.truthaboutfruitdrinks.com/>

# What is a sugary drink?

Soda



Energy drinks



Flavored water



Iced tea



Sports drinks



Flavored milk



Fruit drinks



# Sugary drinks and young children

Child directed fruit-flavored drinks



Toddler milks



Kay MC, Welker EB, Jacquier EF, Story MT. Beverage consumption patterns among infants and young children (0-47.9 months): data from the feeding infants and toddlers study, 2016. *Nutrients*. 2018;10(7):825.  
 Grimes CA, Szymlek Gay EA, Nicklas TA Beverage consumption among U S children aged 0 24 months National health and nutrition examination survey (NHANES). *Nutrients* 2017;9(3):264.  
 Romo-Palafox, M. J., Pomeranz, J. L., & Harris, J. L. (2020). Infant formula and toddler milk marketing and caregiver's provision to young children. *Maternal & child nutrition*, 16(3), e12962.

## Case study 1: Reducing parents' provision of toddler milks and fruit drinks



Fruit-flavored drinks



Toddler milks

## Not recommended by experts

American Academy of Pediatrics



- First sugary drinks
- Increases preferences for sweet
- Marketed as healthy and/or necessary
- Marketing influences parents' choices

Goal: Determine specific messages to address misperceptions created via brand marketing



- DHA
- Iron
- Vitamin D
- 22 Total Nutrients



## Deliverables for project

1. Develop videos to counteract common misperceptions
2. Pilot and refine videos
3. Disseminate via social media and other channels
4. Test videos using online experiment

## Utilized focus groups to inform videos

1. Introductions and warm-up
2. Reactions to Expert Recommendations
3. Response to four Concept Sheets

- **Fruit drinks**

Ingredients  
INGREDIENTS: FILTERED WATER, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% OF CITRIC ACID, ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C), NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, SUCRALOSE (SWEETENER), BLUE 1, CALCIUM DISODIUM EDTA (PRESERVE FRESHNESS).

Vs.

Claims



- **Toddler milks**

Ingredients

INGREDIENTS: HONEY MILK, CONDENSED SOLIDS, VEGETABLE OIL, PALM OIL, COCOBUTYRIN, AND TRIPLE CLUMP BROWN OVEN BREAD, SUGAR, GALACTULOGLUCOSACCHARIDES, POLYDEXTROSE, AND LESS THAN 1% MANGANESE PROPIONATE, CALCIUM CARBONATE, POTASSIUM SULFATE, ZINC SULFATE, MANGANESE SULFATE, CALCIUM SULFATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, TUNA FISH OIL, ASCORBIC ACID, NACONAMIDE, ASCORBIC PALMITATE, CALCIUM PHOSPHATE, VITAMIN B6, HYDROXYLORISE, THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE, RIBOFLAVIN, VITAMIN D3, FOLIC ACID, Biotin, VITAMIN E ACID, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, SOY LECITHIN.

Vs.

Claims



4. Comparison of messages and taglines
5. Final thoughts and wrap-up

# Results

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## 1. Focus groups informed videos

- Misleading marketing surprised parents
- Awareness increased negative perceptions

## 2. Pilot and refine videos

- Relevant, liked, understood

## 3. Disseminate via social media and other channels

- Facebook cost-per-view \$.0.01
- Translated by Helen Keller International

## 4. Test videos using online experiment

# They worked!

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Parents exposed to toddler milk and fruit drink videos

- ✓ Greater negative **attitudes** toward  
these drinks  
children's food and beverage companies
- ✓ Greater **behavioral intentions** to  
not serve/cut back toddler milks  
not serve fruit drinks  
serve more plain milk

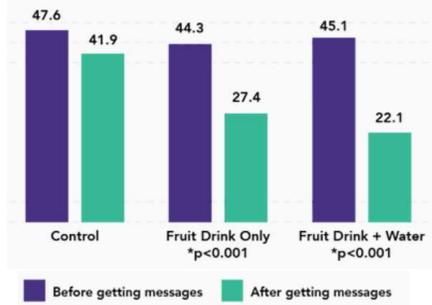
# The truth about fruit drinks



Target group: Hispanic parents of children

Randomized controlled online experiment

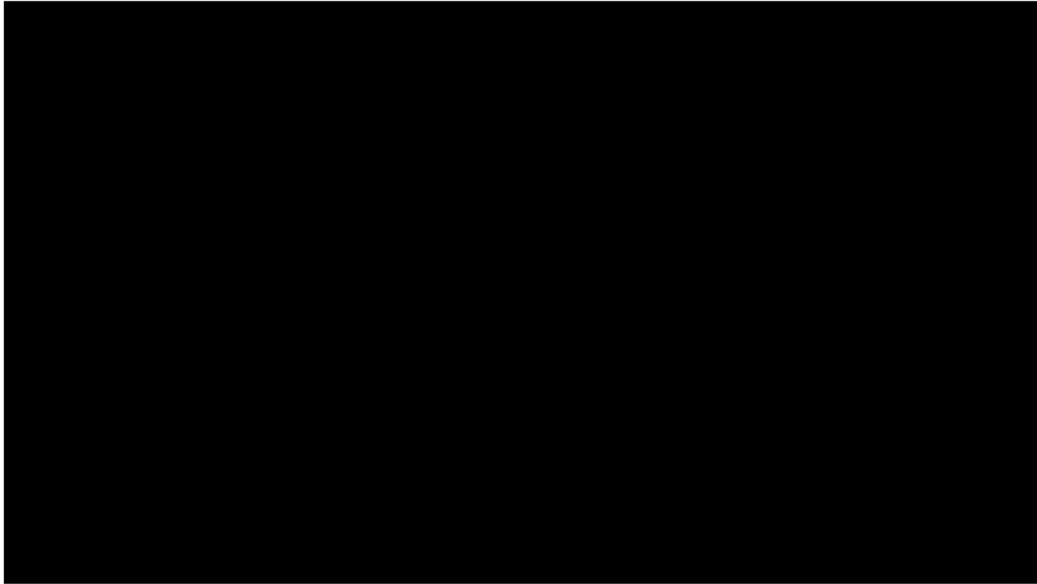
Percent choosing a fruit drink in the online store



## Video pilot on Facebook (cont.)

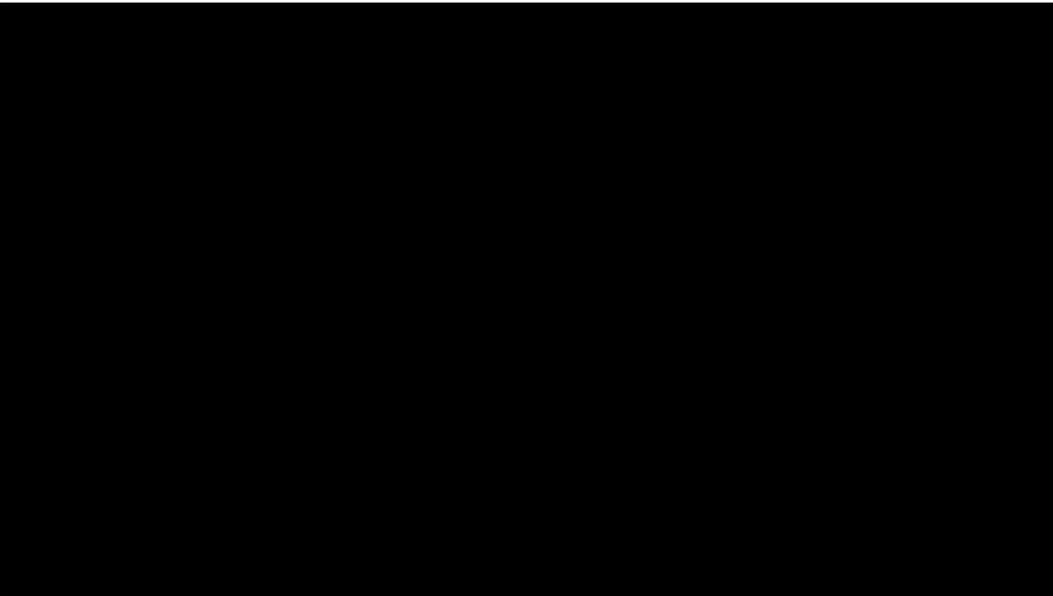
- Reached 102,000 parents / caregivers with English and Spanish. 45% watched the videos through completion (~46,000)
- “Low education attainment” audience was the most engaged.
- All audiences had higher watch rates for the toddler milk video.
- Strong performance in line with other parent-education videos. (Cost per result \$0.01)

## Fruit drinks

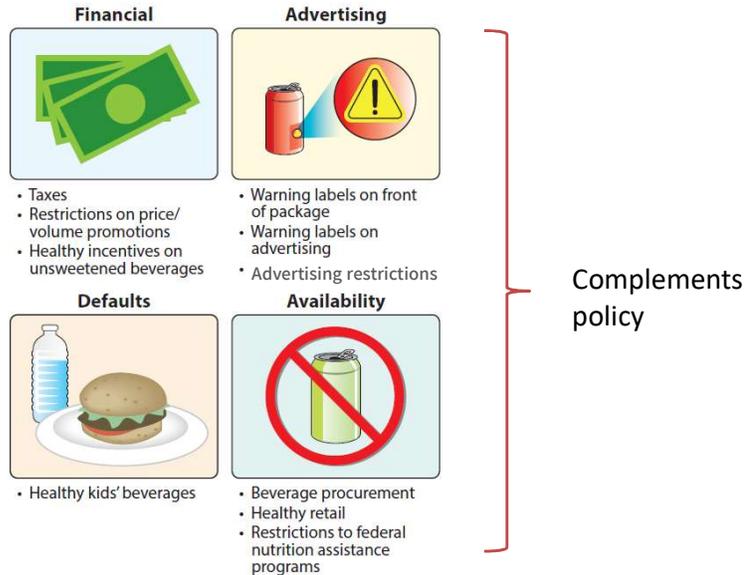


## Toddler milk

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# Sugary drink reduction policy efforts



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# Resources

## Countermarketing toolkits

Keep it simple, keep it real

<https://uconnruddcenter.org/healthydrinksfortoddlers/>

Truth about fruit drinks

<https://www.truthaboutfruitdrinks.com/>

City University of New York - teen

<https://youthfoodcountermarketing.org/>

## Retail focused campaigns

CSPI

<https://www.cspinet.org/news/blog/lets-keep-soda-in-the-soda-aisle>

## Other

Behind the labels

<https://uppindustrywatch.net/>

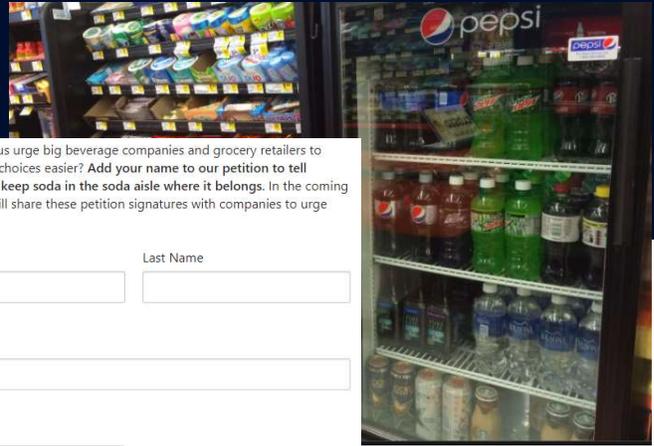
Sugary drink campaigns

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dCODG8bTvLWrNfz0PPsFTDzTW6Jq4mPh/view?usp=sharing>

Sugary Drink FACTS Report and social media supplement

<https://uconnruddcenter.org/research/food-marketing/facts/>

# Keep soda in the soda aisle



Will you help us urge big beverage companies and grocery retailers to make healthy choices easier? Add your name to our petition to tell companies to keep soda in the soda aisle where it belongs. In the coming weeks, CSPI will share these petition signatures with companies to urge action.

First Name  Last Name

Email

Zip

## Reducing marketing in stores

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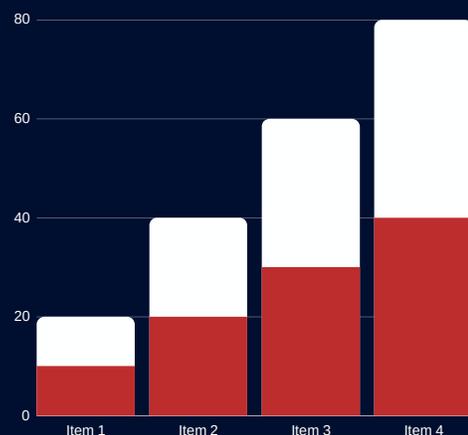
SIGN THE PETITION

# Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit

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# Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit

LOREM IPSUM DOLOR SIT

## Lorem Ipsum

Presentations are communication tools that can be used as lectures, speeches, and more. It is mostly presented before an audience.

Start with an outline of topics and identify highlights, which can be applied to whatever subject you plan on discussing.

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# The Research Team

**Thank you!**



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## Chilean Law

- Enacted in July 2016
- Any product exceeding thresholds:



- \* Should not be marketed to children
- \* Should not be sold / offered in schools
- \* Front-of-package "High-in" warning labels





Over 40 (?) countries have implemented warning labels

Industry response to Chile's policy



"Contains sweeteners not recommended for children"

Mexico



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA SAFETY WARNING:**  
 Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) may contribute to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and tooth decay.

## Recommendations concept

What should my toddler drink?



**Plain Milk & Water:**  
 The only drinks children need



**Plain Milk** for calcium, vitamin D and protein (or breastmilk);  
**Plain Water** for thirst



**100% Juice:**  
 OK in very small amounts



One small cup (4 oz) of **100% Juice** per day or less



**Sugary Drinks**  
 No drinks with added sugar



**Sugary drinks** have no nutrition, make children want more sweets, and can cause cavities

# Fruit drinks - ingredients

## What's in your child's fruit drink?

**Juice:** Not much →

**Diet sweeteners:** Often →

**How much is 26 g of sugar?**

8 oz Sprite or 1 ¼ Snickers or 6 tsp sugar

Many fruit drinks have sugar plus **diet sweeteners** (the same ones that are in diet soda)

Look for ingredients that sound like chemicals: **sucralose, acesulfame potassium, neotame, stevia**

**Hi-C 10% JUICE BLEND**  
BLEND OF PEAR, APPLE, STRAWBERRY AND KIWI JUICES FROM CONCENTRATE AND OTHER INGREDIENTS.

**Nutrition Facts**  
Serving Size 1 Drink Box  
Servings Per Container 10

Amount Per Serving

Calories 100

Total Fat 0g 0%

Sodium 15mg 1%

Total Carbohydrate 27g 9%

Sugars 26g

Protein 0g

Vitamin C 100%

WATER, AND LESS THAN 2% OF: CONCENTRATED JUICES (APPLE, CLARIFIED PINEAPPLE, PASSIONFRUIT, ORANGE), FRUIT PUREES (APRICOT, PAPAYA, GUAVA), ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C), CITRIC ACID, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS, PECTIN, ACACIA GUM, ESTER GUM, RED 40, BLUE 1, SUCRALOSE, ACESULFAME POTASSIUM, POTASSIUM SORBATE AND SODIUM HEXAMETAPHOSPHATE (PRESERVATIVES).

CONTAINS PURE FILTERED WATER, SWEETENERS (HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP SUGAR), PEAR AND APPLE JUICES FROM CONCENTRATE, LESS THAN 0.5% OF: STRAWBERRY AND KIWI JUICES FROM CONCENTRATE, VITAMIN C (ASCORBIC ACID), CITRIC ACID (PROVIDES TARTNESS), NATURAL FLAVORS.

There are over 60 different names for sugar. But they are all the same!  
Agave nectar, cane juice, corn syrup solids, fruit juice concentrate, high fructose corn syrup, sucrose ...

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# Fruit drinks - claims

## Two faces of kids' fruit drinks

The front: **Marketing**

	<b>What the package says:</b>	<b>What it might mean:</b>
	"Less sugar," "No high fructose corn syrup"	Probably has other kinds of sugar, maybe diet sweeteners too
	"100% Vitamin C," "Antioxidants," "Good source of calcium"	Contains added vitamins, like a multi-vitamin
	Pictures of fruit	Fruit flavors, but no real fruit, and sometimes no juice either
	Naturally flavored water beverage	Water, plus sugar, diet sweeteners and flavors
	"All natural," "No artificial ingredients," "Gluten-free," "No caffeine"	Just marketing hype

The back: **What's really inside**

Water, sugar, and maybe a little juice. Watch out for **diet sweeteners** and other chemicals.

Capri Sun, Roarin' Waters **INGREDIENTS:**  
FILTERED WATER, SUGAR, CITRIC ACID, STEVIA LEAF EXTRACT, NATURAL FLAVOR.

Sunny D **INGREDIENTS:**  
WATER, CORN SYRUP AND 2% OR LESS OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING: CONCENTRATED JUICES (ORANGE, TANGERINE, APPLE, LIME, GRAPEFRUIT, PEAR), CITRIC ACID, ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C), THAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN B1), NATURAL FLAVORS, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, CANOLA OIL, SODIUM CITRATE, CELLULOSE GUM, SUCRALOSE, ACESULFAME POTASSIUM.

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# Toddler milks - ingredients

## What are these drinks?

Have you seen these?

- In ads
- In stores, next to formulas



But, what's inside?

Powdered milk



Oil



Sugar



Lots of chemicals



**INGREDIENTS:** NONFAT MILK, CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, VEGETABLE OIL (PALM OLEIN, COCONUT, SOY, AND HIGH OLEIC SUNFLOWER OILS), SUGAR, GALACTOOLIGOSACCHARIDES<sup>1</sup>, POLYDEXTROSE<sup>1</sup>, AND LESS THAN 1%: MAGNESIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM CARBONATE, FERROUS SULFATE, ZINC SULFATE, MANGANESE SULFATE, CUPRIC SULFATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, TUNA FISH OIL<sup>1</sup>, ASCORBIC ACID, NIACINAMIDE, ASCORBYL PALMITATE, CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, VITAMIN B<sub>6</sub> HYDROCHLORIDE, THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE, RIBOFLAVIN, VITAMIN D<sub>3</sub>, FOLIC ACID, BIOTIN, VITAMIN E ACETATE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, SOY LECITHIN.



**Giving your child these sweet milks can backfire:**

Children – even picky eaters – need to learn to like the taste of plain milk and water.

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## Highlights

- **Focus group- parents surprised by misleading marketing**
- **Pilot and refine videos**
- **Disseminate via social media and other channels**
- **Test videos using an online experiment**

## Pilot study of videos

Online survey of 137 parents

Most served both fruit drinks and toddler milks

Overall very positive response to videos

- 80%+ liked, informative, relevant, help me decide
- Accurately recalled messages
- Messages made them feel negative about serving

Recommended edits to fruit drink videos

- Stronger message that fruit drinks are not juice
- Add diet sweeteners not recommended for kids



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## Toddler milks - claims

### What you may not know about toddler milks

The packages seem to promise:

- Nutrition not available in other foods
- Help children grow
- Keep them from getting sick
- Help their brains and eyes develop
- May even replace fruits and vegetables



Don't toddlers need the ingredients in these drinks?

**No!** These claims are not supported by science. They're just marketing hype.

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