



SUGAR FREE SPORTS

FACT SHEET FOR COACHES, PLAYERS AND FAMILIES

OPAL promotes healthy lifestyles for children and families. We seek to partner with sporting clubs to promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging water and fruit only on the court during junior games and training sessions.

Can sugar really harm our kids?

You may recall only a couple of decades ago that sweet drinks were often saved for celebrations like birthdays and Christmas. Today, sugary drinks and lollies have become a regular habit, and are being consumed by our kids in alarming amounts! 'Sugar free sports' is about bringing back the balance.

- 'Sometimes' or 'junk' foods and drinks now make up over 40% of our kids' daily calorie intake.¹
- More than three quarters of children 9-13 exceed the recommended intake for sugar.²
- Consuming sweet drinks in large amounts has been linked with weight gain, diabetes, heart disease and tooth decay – all of which are on the rise in our children and young people.
- Latest figures show 25% of Aussie kids are above the healthy weight range, and research shows that excess weight in childhood usually tracks in to adulthood.³
- Sweet drinks and lollies contain a cocktail of additives, colours and preservatives that may impact on concentration, behaviour and sleep long after the game.

A 600ml sports drink contains around 9 teaspoons of sugar! It takes an average 10 year old one hour to run this off, which practically reverses the health benefits of playing the game.⁴



Do kids need sports drinks for performance?



SA Health
OPAL is a joint program of State and Local Governments.





- NO - the fluids and electrolytes needed to rehydrate after a game of netball can easily be gained from a drink of tap water and a fresh snack such as fruit.

The Australian Institute of Sport recommends special dental precautions

- Sweet drinks and lollies are full of sugar and often high in acid. These products cause bacteria in your mouth to produce more acid, leading to tooth erosion and decay.
- Because of the dental risks, The Australian Institute of Sport⁵ recommends to:

*“Minimise the contact time the sports drink has with their teeth... a straw or squeeze bottle can be used to **direct fluids towards the back of the mouth**. Furthermore, avoid brushing your teeth for at least 30 minutes after having sports drink’s to allow tooth enamel to re-harden.”*

Does this sound like the type of thing we should be giving our kids? – No.

Netball is a great way to begin an active healthy lifestyle so let’s add to it with some more healthy habits – stick to water and fruit during the game!



Image source: EzyHealth, 2015

There are some rare cases where children may benefit from a sports drink. These are limited to occasions when they are doing vigorous activity for longer than one hour or in very hot weather conditions. Most junior sports already have a hot weather policy that limits exposure to extreme heat.

For more information about Sugar Free Sports please contact OPAL Manager Camilla Leaver on 8408 1132 or email cleaver@charlessturt.sa.gov.au

1. Rangan et al 2011, ‘Changes in extra food intake among Australian children between 1995 and 2007’, *Obes Res Clin Pract*, doi: 10.1016/j.orcp.2010.12.001.
2. ABS 2016, 4364.0.55.011 - Australian Health Survey: Consumption of added sugars, 2011-12
3. AIHW 2014, ‘Australia’s Health 2014’, cat no. AUS 178, AIHW, Canberra.
4. Time taken to run or jog off calories was estimated by using the average height and weight of a 10 year old boy and girl based on the CDC Clinical Growth Charts of boys and girls aged 2-20 years. Calories were calculated using Burning Calories Calculator available at the BUPA website (<http://www.bupa.com.au/health-and-wellness/tools-and-apps/tools-and-calculators/burning-calorie>).
5. ASC, 2009, ‘Fluid – who needs it?’, available at: http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition/factsheets/hydration/fluid_-_who_needs_it.