

Tiny Drinks, Big Sugar

Many parents are drawn to the convenience of the small 6.75 ounce drinks complete with a straw that can be used at snack or mealtime for their toddlers or pre-school age children. The boxes are colorful and advertize the juice and vitamin content that makes them appear to be very healthy choices for their children. But a closer look at the sugar content of these boxed drinks tells us a different story....these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and obesity.

Everyone shopping for their family must be able to calculate the sugar content of foods and beverages to be an informed consumer. The most important fact to know is: 4 grams of sugar (carbohydrate) = 1 teaspoon of sugar.

A recent shopping trip to a Wichita area store provided the following samples of pouch or boxed fruit flavored drinks for the purposes of this article.

Sugar Content of 6.75 ounce Flavored Drinks

Drink:	Total grams = # Tsp of sugar
1. Market Pantry 100% Berry Juice	27 grams = 6.75
2. Nestle Orange Tangerine 100% Juicy Juice	26 grams = 6.50
3. Hi C Fruit Punch	25 grams = 6.25
4. Kool Aid Burst (Tropical Punch, Grape or Berry Blue)	24 grams = 6.00
5. Capri Sun Grape Tide 100% Juice	23 grams = 5.75
6. Nestle Grape Juicy Juice	23 grams = 5.75
7. Minute Maid 100% Apple Juice	22 grams = 5.50

As you may know, sugar turns to acid in the presence of certain bacteria in our mouth, within seconds of ingestion. The good news in all of this is that companies are now offering lower sugar content children's drinks. Some samples listed below have up to 25% less sugar than the original drinks.

Sugar Content of 6.75 ounce NEW Flavored Drinks

Drink:	Total grams = # Tsp of sugar
1. Market Pantry Cooler	18 grams = 4.5
2. Capri Sun 25% less sugar	18 grams = 4.5
3. Harvest Kids Berry Berry Good Lemonade Goodness Grapeness	10 grams = 2.5

It is comforting to dental professional and parents that the food and beverage industry is responding to the fact that too much sugar in our diet is unhealthy. Lower sugar content drinks will help everyone as we work together on behalf of healthy, cavity free kids!

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