

# HEALTHY FAMILIES

A Middle School Program for Diabetes Prevention

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Kelly\* has one daughter who will be 12 this year and a son who just turned 21. She works full-time for a security company. She describes her life as “controlled chaos”. Here is what she has to say about her daughter’s health habits:

“I’ve learned there are three words. There’s nutrition, there’s snacks, and there’s treats, and if you notice the snacks and treats are not nutritional. They’re just stuff.

It just amazes me how much damage the other foods do. I didn’t know that. I always thought you had to be in your seventies and overweight and under-exercised in order to get diabetes, type 2. I didn’t realize it could start in grade school until the HEALTHY program came to my daughter’s school. I used to eat chips every day and it never bothered me, I thought. But I’m suffering the consequences for it now. I’ve got arthritis and problems with my heart. And I

found out that most of the stuff that I suffer with is because I didn’t eat properly. And I don’t want my daughter to go through that.

My daughter drinks water, milk, juice, and the occasional ice cream float. Every meal she has a choice between milk and water.

I think the beverage choices are hardest for most parents. I know kids who drink two or three sodas a day. And it’s ‘My child won’t

drink anything else.’ And that’s not true. They drink sodas because they’re available.”

**What does Kelly recommend to other parents?**

“Knowledge is power. You have to show them that it’s a nutritional thing, it’s a fitness thing, and it will make you live longer and it will help prevent all these other diseases you can get.”

\* not her real name

This newsletter is brought to you by the HEALTHY study, which is working with your child’s middle school this semester to help students learn about the importance of drinking water. The story on this page and the other information in this newsletter comes from actual interviews with parents of middle school students across the country.



# HEALTHY FAMILIES

## HEALTHY ADVICE COLUMN

Dear HEALTHY Study,

My wife and I have 2 kids, ages 8 and 13. They play outside a lot with their friends in the summer. Our 13-year-old son plays basketball and rides his bike everywhere. His younger sister also rides her bike and goes swimming. When they come home, they ask for sports drinks. We buy them when they're on sale at the store but they still cost a lot of money. Do they need to drink sports drinks after playing outside?

Signed,  
Curious Dad

Dear Curious Dad,

It's great that your kids enjoy being physically active. It is important for kids to drink at least 5 cups of water each day, and more when they are active in hot weather. Let them know that the best way to replace water that is lost from exercise is to drink plenty of water. They need to drink water before, during and after exercise. Sports drinks are useful only when they are playing hard for more than 2 hours at a time. An example is when kids play ball in a league and they have a long practice or game. For regular everyday play, kids do not need to drink sports drinks. Sports drinks are high in sugar (like sodas) and too much sugar is not good for their bodies. Explain that drinking plenty of water is healthier for them.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Your 6th grade child learned about the benefits of water this year in school. Ask him/her the following questions (see answers below):

- How much water should a HEALTHY child drink each day?
- Which is better to drink after exercising, water or soda?
- What is a "sugar added" beverage?



## HEALTHY UPDATE



HEALTHY arrives in San Antonio



Answers: A. 5 cups of water each day. B. Water is better after exercise. C. Any drink with extra sugar.