

Thursday 6 April 2017

Parents Pour Water on Fast Food Kids' Meals

**#waterwiththat Launch at the World Congress on Public Health
7.15am, Thursday 6 April, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre**

Australian parents want water to become the standard drink offered to their children when eating out. In a Parents' Voice survey of Australian parents, 89 per cent agreed that water should be the default option in kids' meals.

Advocacy group Parents' Voice presented those findings at today's launch of the #waterwiththat campaign in Melbourne. Alice Pryor, Campaigns Manager for Parents' Voice, said: "Our parents are sick of seeing advertisements for fast food kids' meals that don't match the in-store reality. These companies have pledged not to market unhealthy food and drinks to children, yet their meals come with a sugary drink as standard."

With 47 per cent of Australian children consuming at least one sugary drink every day¹, the campaign #waterwiththat is urging all signatories to the *Quick Service Restaurant Initiative for Responsible Advertising and Marketing to Children (QSRI)* to put water with their kids' meals.

Along with overweight and obesity concerns, tooth decay is a growing worry for Australian children and teenagers. "By the age of 12, one in two Australian children will have decay in their adult teeth, with added sugar being a major factor in the development of caries," stated Clinical Associate Professor Matthew Hopcraft. "We need to address the burden that sugary drink consumption is placing on our children."

Subway Australia is one quick service restaurant chain that has already put this idea into action. Ben Miles from Subway Australia said: "We're proud of our Kids' Pak – it's a child-specific portion size, comes with water as standard and is a nutritionally balanced option, packed full of colourful vegetables, fibre, carbohydrate and lean protein. Kids' Pak also benefits from the improvements we've made to transform our entire menu – a 38% reduction in sodium, low sugar and low saturated fat across the range, as well as removing artificial ingredients. We've been offering wholesome, nutritious choices since our founding 50 years ago, and by working alongside great organisations like Parents' Voice, we're able to identify improvements and continue to make positive changes for the whole family."

Parent of two, Kristy Schirmer is worried about the constant pushing of sugary drinks on children: "I teach my kids about healthy eating and moderation, but my messages are constantly undermined by corporations and their marketing. Kids' fast food meals could easily have water instead of sugary drink. Water should be the first choice for kids."

Ms Pryor added: "Alarming, children aged 9–13 years consume 7kg of sugar from sugary drinks every year." Parents' Voice is urging Australian fast food companies to make a simple change. Serve water."

-Ends-

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Parents' Voice is supported by:



Note to editors:

Parents' Voice is an online network of parents who are interested in improving the food and activity environments of Australian children. Formerly known as The Parents' Jury, Parents' Voice was formed in 2004 and represents thousands of Australian parents. Parents' Voice is supported by Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Victoria, VicHealth, YMCA Australia and the Bluearth Foundation.

Clinical Associate Professor Matthew Hopcraft is a public dental health expert, former President of the Australian Dental Association (Victorian Branch), and past contestant on MasterChef Australia. He co-founded SugarFree Smiles to advocate for measures to improve oral health in Australia.

Sugary drinks are defined as all sugary drinks that provide unnecessary kilojoules and have no nutritional value, such as soft drinks, energy drinks, and fruit drinks that contain added sugar.

Signatories to the QSRI are: Chicken Treat, Hungary Jacks, KFC, McDonald's Australia, Oporto, Pizza Hut and Red Rooster.

ⁱ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.007main+features7102011-12>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/E33C412F3A8760EE539F490CF517FF27/S0007114515005255a.pdf/div-class-title-dietary-intake-and-food-sources-of-added-sugar-in-the-australian-population-div.pdf>

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