



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **New *Sugar Bites* TV Ads Target Children’s Juice Drinks**

Concord, CA – Days after a bill to place warning labels on sugary drinks died in Sacramento, Contra Costa County’s Sugar Bites campaign is launching provocative new television commercials challenging the deceptive marketing tactics used to trick parents into thinking sugary juice drinks are healthy beverages for young children.

The commercials, available in English and Spanish, feature a young child pleading with her mother to purchase a juice drink in the grocery store. The mother is horrified when the container morphs into a toothy monster and she learns that consumption of sugary beverages can lead to tooth decay, obesity, and type II diabetes. First 5 Contra Costa and the Healthy and Active Before 5 collaborative created the ads.

“Most children’s juice drinks contain as much sugar as soda and miniscule amounts of fruit, yet they’re marketed as healthy options for young children,” said Contra Costa Health Services pediatrician and Healthy and Active Before 5 member Dr. Diane Dooley. “The new Sugar Bites ads provide a much-needed counter message for parents barraged by misleading claims from the beverage industry.”

A [recent study](#) by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity found that most parents believe some sugary drinks are healthy choices for kids, primarily because the labeling and marketing of these products imply they are nutritious. Among parents surveyed with children ages 2 to 5, 80 percent served them juice drinks such as Capri Sun or Sunny D. That’s why researchers recommend that, in addition to product labeling changes, sugary drink health campaigns should focus on juice drinks as well as soda.

“We may not have beverage industry advertising budgets, but we have the science and the truth. And parents have a right to know that sugary drinks are tied to serious, lasting health risks,” said Cally Martin, Deputy Director of First 5 Contra Costa.

According to researchers, sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugar in the diets of children and contribute to childhood obesity. Unless trends change, health advocates say one in three U.S. children born after the year 2000 – and nearly half of Latino and African American children – will develop type II diabetes in their lifetimes. Already half of California children experience tooth decay before kindergarten.

The Sugar Bites commercials will run through July on Contra Costa cable stations and online. The campaign also includes a two-minute video with tips for parents to cut back on sugary drinks and serve their children water instead.

**(more)**

**Watch the commercials:**

- Sugar Bites 30-Second TV Ad: <https://youtu.be/TzPS6ELoZ1I>
- Sugar Bites 2-Minutes Informational Video: <https://youtu.be/8U91Rby-O3Q>

To learn more, visit the campaign website: [www.cutsugarydrinks.org](http://www.cutsugarydrinks.org).

**About First 5 Contra Costa**

First 5 Contra Costa helps young children start school healthy, nurtured and ready to learn by investing in programs and activities focused on children during their first five years, the most important time in children's development. Since 2000, First 5 Contra Costa has invested more than \$120 million in Proposition 10 tobacco tax funds to help Contra Costa's children get the best possible start in life. Learn more: [www.firstfivecc.org](http://www.firstfivecc.org).

**About Healthy and Active Before 5**

Healthy and Active Before 5 is a collaborative committed to reducing childhood obesity in Contra Costa County. The collaborative includes 50 Contra Costa community organizations who serve families with children up to age five. Learn more: [www.healthyandactivebefore5.org](http://www.healthyandactivebefore5.org).

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