

Council OKs rule for healthy kids' drinks

By **Dave Ryan** From page A1 | May 27, 2015

Restaurants affected by the healthy kids' drinks ordinance:

Applebee's
Beach Hut Deli
Bistro 33
Black Bear Diner
Café Bernardo
Carl's Jr.
de Vere's Irish Pub
Del Taco
The Habit Burger
Jack in the Box
Lamppost Pizza
Paesano's
Panda Express
Pluto's
Round Table Pizza
Sudwerk
Taco Bell
Togo's

The Davis City Council unanimously gave the green light Tuesday to a new city ordinance that will make the default beverage for children's meals at local restaurants milk or water, instead of sugary soda.

The action was the culmination of one of Mayor Dan Wolk's initiatives to improve life for Davis children, from safe routes to school to banning smoking in all multi-family housing complexes, the latter being the most controversial.

Making milk or water the first thing offered to children at local restaurants is definitely not.

Following council orders in 2014 when the issue first came up, city staff launched a campaign to solicit opinion about the proposed rule, mailing letters to affected restaurants, distributing a survey to them, holding a public meeting to discuss the ordinance and mailing a second letter.

The result: Three emails from restaurants with two in support and one opposed.

City Councilwoman Rochelle Swanson said the lack of outcry from the restaurant community showed how uncontroversial the rule is.

Most of the 122 restaurants in Davis that offer children's meals already offer a healthy option, with city staff saying only one-fifth are truly affected by the ordinance. McDonald's is not on that list, but some community favorites like The Habit Burger and family-friendly establishments like Black Bear Diner would have to change their routines.

There is a laundry list of health studies showing sugary drinks as a key driver in childhood obesity and diabetes as well as pre-diabetes in teens. The drinks provide about half of children's intake of sugar and are the largest source of calories in their diets, studies show.

During comments from the public, Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza said in the rough and tumble world of modern parenting, families are eating out more.

"Parents can still choose, but I think they will choose milk or water," he said.

Local resident Kari Fry said having restaurants provide soda as the default drink can set up a fight between her and her children.

"At times I give my children a soda as a treat, but I prefer that to be my choice rather than being the bad guy, setting up that conflict where I am taking the soda away," she said.

Not everyone was in support of the ordinance.

Davis resident Dorte Jensen said restaurants are part of society, too, and the council should keep the status quo.

"Because otherwise Davis will go from the city of bikes to the city of regulation," she said.

Mayor Pro Tem Robb Davis said making healthy drinks the default choice for kids' meals is not an attack on civil liberties because parents still can ask for soda.

"The health of our children in our community is our responsibility," he said. "... I'm glad to be part of this small step."

Other healthy kids initiatives someday may go before the council as well, including ensuring that every child from birth through age 5 is screened for developmental and behavioral challenges through partnerships with local agencies and nonprofits, and combating bullying in the community by partnering with the Davis Phoenix Coalition and the Davis Joint Unified School District.

— Reach Dave Ryan at dryan@davisenterprise.net. Follow him on Twitter at [@daveuritesnews](https://twitter.com/daveuritesnews)