Warning over EXTREME fruit juice sugar levels

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FRUIT juice drinks have been found to contain the equivalent of five teaspoons of sugar, a damning investigation has found.

Almost half those on sale contained at least a child’s daily recommended maximum sugar intake of 0.7oz (19g).

Researchers were horrified when they measured the quantities in 203 standard-sized branded and supermarket own label products.

In the 158 fruit juice drinks studied, average sugar content was 11g per 200ml but rose to 21g in 21 pure fruit juices and 26g in 24 smoothies.

Disturbingly 85 juice drinks – more than 40 per cent of the total sample – contained at least 19g of “free” sugars, or almost five teaspoons.

Professor Simon Capewell of University of Liverpool who lead the investigation said: “We were shocked and amazed to find the high levels of free sugars in drinks marketed at kids.

“These high sugar levels represent a worrying risk to children’s health in terms of rotten[teeth](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/655107/Fruit-juice-sugar-levels-could-prove-very-harmful), obesity, premature Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and common cancers.”

“Our families surely deserve better protection by a levy on all sugary drinks and by a ban on TV marketing before the 9pm watershed.”

The report also said fruit juices, juice drinks and smoothies with a high free sugar content should not count towards the Government’s “five-a-day” recommendations, as is currently the case.

Cardiologist Dr Aseem Malhotra, adviser to the National Obesity Forum, said: “The consumption of fruit juice, which lacks the fibre of whole fruit, is strongly associated with increasing the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and should be considered a major health hazard.

“The public health message should be loud and clear: eat the fruit but do not drink the juice."