



SCALE BACK ON SUGARY BEVERAGES

There is nothing like a cold glass of sweet tea with a hint of lemon on a hot summer day! On the other hand, is there? The truth of the matter is, there are many liquids that satisfy your taste buds but may not quench your thirst.

When you decide to make a lifestyle change to what you eat, you also must look at what drinks are being consumed. Sugary drinks such as sweet tea, sodas, juice, sports drinks, and energy drinks are all water with a lot of added sugar. All of these beverages account for the caloric intake consumed each day. Having a 32 ounce soda for lunch everyday may not seem that bad, especially when it only costs \$1, but you may end up paying for it with your health. Most people do not know they're consuming 17.5 teaspoons of sugar. That is only if you do not decide to refill it, which could lead to a whopping 35 teaspoons of sugar just in what you drank!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet. Overconsumption of calories leads to weight gain. Drinking too many sugary drinks is also associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, cavities, heart disease as well as other chronic diseases that can be prevented just by scaling back on our sugary beverages.

Fruit Juices

Drinking beverages like 100% fruit juice is ok but we only need about four to six ounces per day. Although it does have vitamins, it is high in calories from concentrated fruit sugars. If you are craving fruit, grab a whole piece of fruit to get less sugar and the added benefit of fiber.

Diet Sodas or Artificial Sweetened Drinks

Many people use no or low calorie sweeteners to flavor their water or they consume a diet soda to control blood sugar for diabetes. Limit your consumption to no more than 12 ounces a day. For many people, these are good options because they have

less calories and no sugar. However, if overconsumed, certain sweeteners (for example, sugar alcohols) could potentially lead to stomach cramping and diarrhea.

Sports Drinks

A great rule of thumb for consuming sports drinks is, *If you are a spectator you need water, if you are actively participating then you can consume them to help restore the sweat and electrolytes your body has released.* Sports drinks are good to provide an athlete with some quick carbohydrates after 60 minutes of intense activity. For anyone else, it is just unwanted calories and sugar. Remember that children rarely ever need sports drinks.

Water- the Essential Nutrient

Water should be consumed more than any other beverage throughout the day. Water helps to restore fluids lost through metabolism, breathing, and sweating. It helps to keep you from overheating, lubricates the joints and tissues, maintains healthy skin, and is necessary for proper digestion. It is the perfect zero-calorie beverage for quenching thirst and rehydrating your body.

Making the Lifestyle Change

Getting started on reducing your sugary drink intake may be difficult at first but remember, you did not get here over night. So give yourself time to break the old habits and create new lifestyle changes. Set a goal for yourself each day on how much water you will consume.

- Use cute water bottles or cups that will encourage you to increase your daily water intake.
- Do not purchase sugary drinks when you buy groceries. Leave them off your grocery list on purpose.
- If you want a sugary drink, have a cup only (8 ounces).
- Take it one day at a time, especially if you are a habitual sugary drinker.

Soon you will be well on your way to a Healthier, Stronger, and Elevated new you!

INCLUSION MATTERS: Check your drink's nutrition label to see how much added sugar is in it. Download a smartphone app to assist with reading and understanding labels. When in doubt, water is always a great beverage choice and contains no sugar. Adequate water intake especially supports individuals with limited mobility to promote better regulation and bowel movements.

<https://www.nchpad.org/1734/6859/Water-Wednesday> (nchpad article on hydration and video)

<https://www.nchpad.org/1242/5911/Water--The-Essential-Nutrient> (nchpad article – water the essential nutrient..list how much water is needed)

FAMILY MATTERS: It is easy for a child to be exposed to sugary beverages like soda, fruit punch, sports drinks, and slushies whether they're at a birthday party or a sporting event. These beverages are colorful, sweet, and very appealing to children. But when children are thirsty, water is the gold standard. Make water fun by adding in pieces of fruit or no calorie mixes that add color and flavor. And don't forget milk! For children who can tolerate it, milk is needed daily because it supports strong bones and teeth while being a great source of calcium and vitamin D for growth.

LINKS:

Cut calories the easy way: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/for-you/cut-calories-the-easy-way/>

The sour truth about sweet drinks: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/for-you/sugar-the-sour-truth-about-sweet-drinks/>