

DON'T DRINK YOUR CALORIES!

Soda Pop – Mankind's Worst Ever Discovery?

It may well be that soda pop is mankind's worst ever discovery. If you drink soda pop, especially the caffeinated kind, it could kill you, as shown recently when a man's death seems to have been associated with his overconsumption of diet soda. But most especially, it can go right after your kids' health.

Pop gives the average teenager approximately 12.5 teaspoons of refined sugar a day. It works out to that much more than what our US government has determined people need in unrefined sugar per day. Also, your kid and you are using soda pop, in all probability, as a food. In 1977-78, teenagers drank twice as much milk as soft drinks, but by 1994-96, it had turned around; they were drinking twice as much soda as they were drinking milk. And such consumption is linked with lower intake of nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and fiber.

Meanwhile, empty calories are all those soda pops contain, aside from ulcer-causing acids. The ingredients in both regular and diet pop can eat away the inner lining of your stomach, eventually causing severe digestive problems. And the average small bottle or can of soda contains over 200 calories, none of which harbor any real nutrients for your health whatsoever. If you consume one can of pop per day, you will gain 12 pounds in only one year. Pop is contributing to major health problems, particularly obesity. Such a condition has been proven to injure your health by the USDA Economic Research Service. Several studies by them have shown that weight gain is directly related to soft drink consumption. Weight gain itself is the prime risk factor for Type Two Diabetes, which can make you go blind, cause lifelong paralysis and finally death. It can be controlled only through a daily regimen of diet or medication. Do you want that sort of thing in your life? If not, cut back on your drinking of soda pop.

Also, fruit juices and drinks like iced tea, Gatorade, Snapple, and other such common drinks which are promoted to be "healthier" than soda pop are often no such thing. Check the label before you buy fruit juice. It may contain only 10% real fruit juice. And the drinks that claim to contain 100% real fruit juice have just as many calories as soft drinks and are not that much more nutritious, either. Many fruit juices are simply loaded with sugar, either refined or unrefined. A glass of apple juice holds 10 teaspoons of sugar, as the juice is concentrated from a much larger amount of apples. You're much better off eating a single apple and getting the smaller amount of calories and the roughage instead. The sugar in apple juice is concentrated, unlike when in the original apple, and it will raise your insulin level, making your body burn excess blood sugars rather than fats.

And our average alcohol intake is certainly not any better. Hard liquors contain a high amount of calories, and even a light beer has about 100 calories—all empty. Alcohol is quite dense in calories; one gram of alcohol is worth seven calories. Although an occasional glass of fine vintage red wine is good for your heart, it contains a high amount of alcohol, which is high in calories and contains no nutrients. And alcohol does not satisfy your body's hunger cravings, as your body will burn alcohol for fuel before it begins to burn your body fat. So you will continue to eat commensurate to your hunger, thus piling on the calories. This is not to mention the facts that alcohol also destroys your brain cells and causes a remarkable amount of vehicle accidents and deaths.

It may well be that soda pop, alcohol and other such empty calorie consumption is a major problem in America, especially for teens and adults. That's why they're trying to remove it from the schools. And as you get older, being overweight can give you coronary disease, strokes from blood clots building up in your arteries, and cancer. Cancer is like being eaten away by your own body, literally a piece at a time.

Also, always downing that two-liter of soda pop increases the risk of osteoporosis in both men and women when they drink soda pop instead of milk, which is rich in bone-building calcium, and dentists are especially keen on people not drinking sugar-laden, no calcium, hopelessly empty soda pop. All it seems to do is taste good, it would appear. Dental experts say that if you drink it between meals to quench your thirst, you get tooth decay and dental erosion due to the sugars and the acids in pop.

Some of your desire for pop puts you at a risk for kidney stones and a slightly higher risk of heart disease. There needs to be more research done in these two areas, but there has been a fair degree of documentation done by the University of California at Berkeley.

Other ingredients in soda pop such as Yellow Number Five promote attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in some children. Yellow #5 also induces allergic reactions such as asthma in a sizeable portion of individuals.

Soft drinks are one of the most heavily promoted items in all of human history. You can find them in gas station stores, the 7-11 or the AM-PM, vending machines are everywhere, and they are lining the school halls also. You need something wet to quench your thirst, and that's the secret reason people are going to bars anyway. To get a drink. But neither the soda pop nor the booze, as both caffeine and alcohol are addictive drugs.

US companies spend \$700 million or more per year on media advertising for soda pop per year, and hundreds of millions on other promotional activities. They even make contracts with your public school systems to sell soda pop in the halls. Parents and educators have recently, however, been making a concerted attempt to reign in that form of merchandising. Several states have banned at least the non-diet soft drinks from some or all schools, but that could be more of a step backward than a step forward. It does cut the calories, and diet soda has been proven to not quench hunger by some studies, again done at the University of California. Your kids will not do much better on diet soda, but at least they'll be more prone to eating or drinking something else...unless they don't. Diet soda is still full of those same acids they mentioned, and have no sugar in them to help them along in your digestive cramp. They can cause nausea, diarrhea and constipation, not to mention those same allergic reactions, including asthma, as regular soda does. Diet soda alone is not an "easy way out."

Nonetheless, the Center for Science in the Public Interest makes these recommendations: that governments should require chain restaurants to declare the calorie content of soft drinks and all other items on menus and menu boards; the Food and Drug Administration has been told by them to require labels on non-diet soft drinks to state that frequent consumption of sugar-laden drinks promotes obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, osteoporosis and other health problems; governments should provide water fountains in schools, government buildings, parks and other public places; school systems and other organizations, and all those organizations which cater to children should stop selling soft drinks, candy and junk foods in hallways, shops and cafeterias.

Until this month of September, 2005, there was no hard and clear evidence through science that soda itself alone can make kids fatter. But reporting in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, a team of Harvard researchers had found the first evidence absolutely linking soda pop drinking to childhood obesity. Twelve year olds who drink soft drinks regularly are far more likely to become or to be obese than those who don't.

Obesity experts at Harvard found this to be highly important and spent 19 months following the children rather than simply following them around for a week or so like many studies gone before have done. Statistically through many similar studies it's been found to be more important to use a lengthy study than a sporadic or shorter study. And in this study, it was found that schoolchildren consume who drink pop take in some 200 calories per day more than children who usually don't. It supports the notion that long-term obesity is an ingrained behavior, starting in childhood, and that we don't compensate well for calories in liquid. In short, water or milk is simply better.

In fact, the answer to this problem is patently obvious: drink water, and more water. Milk is good, but you should always remember that it's a food, and not that useful for thirst purposes. Whole milk especially is high in both fat and calories, so go easy on the milk. Water, on the other hand, has no calories and is the very thing you should drink to quench your thirst. You should drink a minimum of six eight-ounce glasses of water per day, say all the experts who have studied this subject. And water, without adding on any calories, can take the edge off your hunger and help you fill up. A good time to drink a glass of water is just before a big, calorie laden meal; it will slow you down. One strategy that works is to always carry a bottle of fresh, clean water with you, and to take sips from it frequently. This also helps prevent daily dehydration, which can be exacerbated by overconsumption of alcohol, soda pop and coffee or tea, which all produce excess thirst.

A small daily consumption of coffee and/or tea is fine, as long as you don't add lots of sugar to your caffeinated or decaffeinated beverage. Tea contain antioxidants, which are anti-cancer agents benefiting your overall health. Green tea has been discovered to have terrific health benefits, less caffeine, and to boost your metabolism, helping you to burn fat. You can even drink it before you go to bed, calming hunger cravings for that "midnight snack" which might cause you to gain weight. But avoid the "designer drinks" you find at Starbuck's and other such shops which are loaded with high amounts of milk fat and sugar. If you must have your latte, put cinnamon in it, which helps slow down your absorption of sugar - and which also has no calories and tastes delicious. And add honey or turbinado sugar and low-fat milk to your drink.

Although fruit juices are not the best bet to quench your hunger and your thirst, as they contain too high of amounts of insulin-raising sugars, vegetable juices such as V-8, Welch's, and Heinz tomato juice are fine, as they are both low in calories and do not have a high sugar concentration. However, don't depend on them too heavily, as they are high in salt content, which again like soda pop, alcohol and caffeinated beverages make you thirstier. Too high of salt intake is also associated with major health problems. And you should not substitute "veggie" juices for fresh fruits and vegetable, which contain fibers and other nutrients than you will find in the juices from them. In fact, if you eat fresh fruit and vegetables in large quantities, they will help you with your thirst problem and fill you up with proper food and nutrients as well. Have a slice of watermelon instead of a beer. Fruits and veggies will help quench your thirst, as well as drinking plenty of water.

But soda pop has been shown to make you thirstier, and that does lead to the further drinking of it as you attempt to quench your thirst. Something about the combination of chemicals in many soda pops dries out people. So then they reach for another can of soda, thus becoming committed to a vicious cycle. And that greatly increases their calorie intake, especially since pop today is now coming supersized as well, filling up those larger and larger plastic single-serve looking bottles. It might not be a bad idea to try to follow the serving suggestion, at least, on the bottle. And it might be a better idea to drink either soda pop or alcohol of any kind from a plastic or glass bottle than an aluminum can, as the aluminum has been shown to seep into the can. This may have something to do with the formation of Alzheimer plaques in the human brain, as aluminum may be a cause of Alzheimer's disease, a dreadful illness that causes people to forget everyone and everything that holds any meaning whatsoever in their lives.

Water is good for you, where caffeine and alcohol can actually hurt your body and eventually cause long-term health problems leading to great pain and death. So choose wisely for you and your loved ones.

Don't Drink Your Calories

The average person's beverage consumption equals approximately 20% of their total caloric intake on a daily basis. In other words, many of us are drinking our calories!

What have you had to drink today? Did you have a big glass of orange juice w/breakfast? Or just the juice? Did you stop at Starbucks and get a venti drink of your choice? Or you might enjoy a smoothie from your favorite smoothie chain. Maybe you drink black coffee with sugar and cream at home or the office?

A Venti Peppermint Mocha made with 2% milk and whipped cream is a whopping 480 calories and 17g of fat. If you get it nonfat with no whipped cream it's till 360 calories but only 3.6g of fat. Still, that's way too many calories for one beverage. You could have a large, healthy breakfast for all those calories, not to mention the nutritional boost from eating real, healthy food.

When I go to Starbucks I get drip coffee and add my own cream and no calorie sweetener. That way I know exactly what I'm getting in my cup.

Many people think that juice, since it's from fruit, is healthy. But juice contains a lot of calories and sugar and little of the nutrition of the whole fruit, unless you have a juicer and juiced the whole fruit for that glass of juice you enjoy. Eating a whole apple, orange or cup of berries has about a third or the calories of the same juice and has all the fiber, vitamins and antioxidants without the sugar shock.

You would think that a smoothie is a great choice as a beverage or meal replacement. However, most smoothies from your favorite smoothie shop are again loaded with a lot of calories and sugar. Sure there's a lot of fruit in them but many are made with ice cream or sherbets or sorbets which equal a lot of sugar. Look at the nutrition information on your favorite smoothie the next time you stop in for one. You might be shocked that your healthy treat is not so healthy with the average regular size smoothie having approximately 400 calories.

I had to stop going to a retail establishment to get my favorite protein smoothie about a year ago. It was originally 400 calories (regular size) with 50g of protein and 20 carbs. I'd get the small size which saved me 100 calories. Unless you're a body builder you don't need 50g of protein in one sitting. Sounds good right? But then a lab tested the nutrition facts of each smoothie and my favorite was now 600 calories!!! So I don't even go there anymore. I can mix up a protein shake in my own kitchen in just a minute or two that has only 190 calories and almost no fat.

Of course we all know that soda is filled with sugar and empty calories unless you drink diet. Choosing sugar-free beverages is a good choice but nothing hydrates you like water.

I realize many of you don't like to drink water or get bored with water. It's just one of those things you have to learn to like for your health if nothing else.

Water is the only beverage that helps regulate body temperature, keeps you regular, flushes out toxins, boosts your metabolism, and improves organ function. So if you have trouble drinking adequate amounts of water jazz it up with a squeeze of lemon or a little cranberry juice to add flavor.

Facts About Sugar

Are you concerned about the sugar in your diet? These are some facts you probably want to know.

Sugar in processed foods

Sugar is found in many processed foods. If you read the label in the products you buy, you may be surprised to note its presence in beans, soups, yogurt, baby food, vegetables, bread, even non-sugar coated cereals, catsup, peanut butter, salad dressing, chili, and many other foods.

Burning off extra sugar

Adding 4 extra teaspoons of sugar to your diet every day, one expert points out, will necessitate walking 1 mile per day to work it off, or you will gain 6 pounds in one year.

Dietary need for sugar

There is no specific dietary need for sugar, as such. The body's nutritional need for glucose can be met by many other carbohydrates, as well as by protein or fat (which are not preferred sources).

Inborn attraction to sugar

Our attraction to sweet taste is believed to be inborn. When a sweet solution is injected into the amniotic fluid of a pregnant woman, the fetus will swallow actively, a reaction considered intuitive.

Sugar and dental carries

Most dentists agree that sticky sweets are a major source of dental carries in children. Sweet foods that are part of a meal are less cavity producing than between-meal snacks. The total amount of sugar eaten is not as important in the formation of dental decay as is the type of sugary food eaten, how often it is eaten, and how long it sticks to the teeth. Brushing and flossing teeth and rinsing the mouth after meals and snacks is recommended.

Quick energy?

Sugar and other sweets do not really provide "quick energy"; they just provide a quick rise in blood sugar. The body has energy reserves it can call on when needed for activity and does not need, or particularly profit from, an outside food source such as a candy bar or high-sugar drink for "instant fuel" just prior to activity.

Sugar and obesity

While some people link sugar and heart disease, there is no scientific support for such speculation. However, a diet high in sugar (or, of course, high in any other source of calories) may lead to obesity, which is often associated with heart disease as well as various other health problems.

Cutting down on sugar

To cut down on sugar consumption, try the following:

- Always read the label on processed foods and avoid those with sugar (or other sweeteners) such as dextrose, fructose, or corn syrup high on the list of ingredients.
- Switch from soft drinks to fruit juices or water.
- Reduce the amount of sugar you use in coffee or tea, or eliminate it altogether.
- Do not keep sweet food in the house, or use them to reward children.
- Serve more fresh fruit and fewer baked goods for snacks and dessert. Beware of the high sugar contents in the sugar of many canned fruits.
- Experiment with gradually cutting down on the amount of sweetener in recipes. Adding a grated carrot to a recipe can replace some of the sugar in tomato sauce, salads, or even cookies.

SIZING UP SUGAR FOR KIDS

By Luigi Gratton, M.D., M.P.H.

Sugar is a short-term source of both energy and pleasure. But the fact is, kids today are on sugar overload! According to a study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, kids are getting a staggering 29 teaspoons of refined sugar per day. This overconsumption of sugar is causing a variety of problems and health issues.

Currently, about a third of the nation's children and teens are either overweight or obese, and a high-sugar diet is often the cause. Sugar can make it difficult to lose weight because of constantly high insulin levels, which cause the body to store excess carbohydrates as fat. It can also suppress the immune system, cause tooth decay, and even lead to diabetes. What's more, too much sugar can also result in energy peaks and valleys.

HIGHS AND LOWS

After sugar consumption, children experience a rapid rise of the stimulant hormone adrenaline, which causes hyperactivity. In fact, a recent study at Yale University School of Medicine revealed that, when ingested by children, sugar releases twice the amount of adrenaline into the bloodstream as it does in adults. Kids then experience a crashing low, as refined sugars break down very quickly in the body, leaving them tired, irritable and unable to concentrate.

THE CULPRITS

So, which foods contain the most calories from sugar? It all starts with breakfast. Sugar accounts for more than a third of the weight of children's cereals. They contain about 52 percent more sugar than adult cereals and have less protein and fiber.

Another big concern is sugar-sweetened sodas. They are the largest source of added sugar in the daily diets of U.S. children. Each 12 oz. carbonated soft drink contains the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. And juice-flavored drinks aren't any better. They often contain as much added sugar as soft drinks and also tend to be high in calories and low in valuable nutrients.

So, instead of giving your child sugar-loaded cereals and beverages, offer them healthier alternatives, such as fruit. It's a naturally sweet snack that also contains fiber and vitamins they need.

SLURPING YOUR WAY TO WEIGHT GAIN

Liquid calories slip by so easily, it's almost hard to take them seriously. But alas, all those super-sized beverages and high fructose corn syrup concoctions have contributed, quite stealthily, to our obesity epidemic. Our adults have the beer bellies and our children the Big Gulp guts to prove it. Although some cities have started to ban sales of soda in schools, we adults are free to roam in the world of heavily sauced drinks, sometimes adding a meal-sized amount of calories from a tiny little straw. Here are some obvious and not-so-obvious ways to bulk up without ever having to chew.



Burger King Chocolate Ice Cream Shake: 950 calories, 29 grams fat (19 saturated), 640 milligrams sodium, 146 grams sugar

Hmmm ... a milkshake, or an entire meal? You could have a burger (290 calories), small fries (230 calories), and a small soda (140 calories) for fewer calories (660) than this drink. I'd rather chew.

A better bet: small chocolate milk.



Starbucks White Chocolate Mocha Frappuccino: 410 calories, 16 grams fat (10 saturated), 270 milligrams sodium, 54 grams sugar

Is it a coffee, or is it a milkshake? Although the CEO of Starbucks recently made the decision to stop selling sandwiches in their stores, I'm guessing they'll keep selling these espresso-flavored milkshakes as long as we keep buying them. Darn, they're good.

A better bet: iced skim milk latte.



Jamba Juice Peanut Butter Moo'd Shake Original Size: 840 calories, 21 grams fat (4.5 saturated), 122 grams sugar, 15 milligrams cholesterol

Jamba Juice's logo contains a lot of colorful fruit, but there's little of it in this shake. Instead, it has frozen yogurt, chocolate moo'd base (what *is* that?), soy milk, bananas, and peanut butter. With 122 grams of sugar (very few of them from the banana), it's the equivalent of drinking five Cokes (a can has about 40 grams of sugar). Even their less obviously bad Strawberries Wild has 83 grams of sugar.

A better bet: 16-ounce Bright Eyed and Blueberry shake; it has 220 calories, and 38 grams sugar



Orange Julius' Strawberry Banana Shake (32-ounce): 600 calories, 14 grams fat (11 saturated), 87 grams sugar, 130 milligrams sodium

It must be a first: a shake made with lowfat frozen yogurt, bananas, and strawberries that contains 11 grams of saturated fat. Truly amazing. I'd rather eat a Snicker's bar, which has half the calories (280), less saturated fat (5 grams), and less sugar (30 grams).

A better bet: a 20-ounce Orange Julius has only 160 calories and 5 grams fat, none of them saturated



7-Eleven Double Gulp Soda: 600 calories

I drank sixty-four ounces of soda on a cross-country road trip once, and it was a bad scene. My stomach didn't feel quite right for at least a day, and my friend, who also imbibed, was so hopped up on caffeine she started giving lip to the Texas highway patrol who pulled her over for doing ninety in a fifty zone. I think there's still a warrant out for her arrest.

Soda isn't that bad every once in a while; unfortunately, it's hard to find anything smaller than a 16-ouncer and really easy to get things much larger. Cans of

soda seem to be obsolete. The Food and Drug Administration’s official serving size is 8 ounces (100 calories), not eight times that amount. Bigger isn’t better.

A better bet: can of soda (150 calories) or a diet soda.



Bottled Juice: 300–400 calories for 20 ounces

True, juice isn’t inherently bad for you, and can sometimes provide vitamins and nutrients. However, you’d be much better off eating the fruit from which it came rather than drinking mostly empty calories. Many store-bought juices have added sugars, and most come in a 2.5 serving or larger container, making that breakfast accompaniment as many calories as the meal itself.

A better bet: stick to 8-ounce containers or kid’s containers; look for 100 percent juices; juice your own.



Pina Colada: 644 calories (approximately)

If you really like Pina Coladas, you may not only get caught in the rain, but in the fat farm. At around seven hundred calories, this drink, made with rum, coconut milk, and pineapples has more calories than a Big Mac. Other calorically heavy-hitting cocktails are Long Island Iced Teas, Margaritas, and White Russians. Damn, I love those.

A better bet: A glass of red wine; a light beer – or better yet – don’t drink alcoholic beverages at all.

While it’s hard to think about drinks as anything but additions to a meal, the sizes and sugar-laden drinks we’re faced with today make them more like an entire meal. Unfortunately, rarely are they as satisfying or as filling. So when I find myself having more pints of beer than slices of pizza, I get rid of them the only way I know how: by drinking water while I exercise.

RETHINK YOUR DRINK

When it comes to weight loss, there’s no lack of diets promising fast results. There are low-carb diets, high-carb diets, low-fat diets, grapefruit diets, cabbage soup diets, and blood type diets, to name a few. But no matter what diet you may try, to lose weight, you must take in fewer calories than your body uses. Most people try to reduce their calorie intake by focusing on food, but another way to cut calories may be to think about what you drink.

What Do You Drink? It Makes More Difference Than You Think!

Calories in drinks are not hidden (they’re listed right on the Nutrition Facts label), but many people don’t realize just how many calories beverages can contribute to their daily intake. As you can see in the example below, calories from drinks can really add up. But there is good news: you have plenty of options for reducing the number of calories in what you drink.

Occasion	Instead of...	Calories	Try...	Calories
Morning coffee shop run	Medium café latte (16 oz.) made with whole milk	265	Small café latte (12 ounces) made with fat-free milk	125
Lunchtime combo meal	20-oz. bottle of non diet cola with your lunch	227	Bottle of water or diet soda	0
Afternoon break	Sweetened lemon iced tea from the vending machine (16 oz.)	180	Sparkling water with natural lemon flavor (not sweetened)	0
Dinnertime	A glass of non diet ginger ale with your meal (12 oz.)	124	Water with a slice of lemon or lime, or seltzer water with a splash of 100% fruit juice	0 calories for the water with fruit slice, or about 30 calories for seltzer water with 2 ounces of 100% orange juice.
Total beverage calories:		796		125-155

(USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference)

Substituting no- or low-calorie drinks for sugar-sweetened beverages cuts about 650 calories in the example above.

Of course, not everyone drinks the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages shown above. Check the list below to estimate how many calories you typically take in from beverages.

Type of Beverage	Calories in 12 ounces	Calories in 20 ounces
Fruit punch	192	320
100% apple juice	192	300
100% orange juice	168	280
Lemonade	168	280
Regular lemon/lime soda	148	247
Regular cola	136	227
Sweetened lemon iced tea (bottled, not homemade)	135	225
Tonic water	124	207
Regular ginger ale	124	207
Sports drink	99	165
Fitness water	18	36
Unsweetened iced tea	2	3
Diet soda (with aspartame)	0*	0*
Carbonated water (unsweetened)	0	0
Water	0	0

**Some diet soft drinks can contain a small number of calories that are not listed on the nutrition facts label. (USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference)*

Milk contains vitamins and other nutrients that contribute to good health, but it also contains calories. Choosing low-fat or fat-free milk is a good way to reduce your calorie intake and still get the nutrients that milk contains.

Type of Milk	Calories per cup (8 ounces)
Chocolate milk (whole)	208
Chocolate milk (2% reduced-fat)	190
Chocolate milk (1% low-fat)	158
Whole Milk (unflavored)	150
2% reduced-fat milk (unflavored)	120
1% low-fat milk (unflavored)	105
Fat-free milk (unflavored)	90

**Some diet soft drinks can contain a small number of calories that are not listed on the nutrition facts label. (USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference)*

Learn To Read Nutrition Facts Labels Carefully

Be aware that the Nutrition Facts label on beverage containers may give the calories for only part of the contents. The example below shows the label on a 20-oz. bottle. As you can see, it lists the number of calories in an 8-oz. serving (100) even though the bottle contains 20 oz. or 2.5 servings. To figure out how many calories are in the whole bottle, you need to multiply the number of calories in one serving by the number of servings in the bottle (100 x 2.5). You can see that the contents of the entire bottle actually contain 250 calories even though what the label calls a "serving" only contains 100. This shows that you need to look closely at the serving size when comparing the calorie content of different beverages.

NUTRITION FACTS LABEL	
Serving Size	8 fl. oz.
Servings Per Container	2.5
Amount per serving	
Calories	100

Sugar by Any Other Name: How To Tell Whether Your Drink Is Sweetened

Sweeteners that add calories to a beverage go by many different names and are not always obvious to anyone looking at the ingredients list. Some common caloric sweeteners are listed below. If these appear in the ingredients list of your favorite beverage, you are drinking a sugar-sweetened beverage.

- High-fructose corn syrup
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrates
- Honey
- Sugar
- Syrup
- Corn syrup
- Sucrose
- Dextrose

High-Calorie Culprits in Unexpected Places

Coffee drinks and blended fruit smoothies sound innocent enough, but the calories in some of your favorite coffee-shop or smoothie-stand items may surprise you. Check the Web site or in-store nutrition information of your favorite coffee or smoothie shop to find out how many calories are in different menu items. And when a smoothie or coffee craving kicks in, here are some tips to help minimize the caloric damage:

At the Coffee Shop:

- Request that your drink be made with fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk
- Order the smallest size available.
- Forgo the extra flavoring – the flavor syrups used in coffee shops, like vanilla or hazelnut, are sugar-sweetened and will add calories to your drink.
- Skip the Whip. The whipped cream on top of coffee drinks adds calories and fat.
- Get back to basics. Order a plain cup of coffee with fat-free milk and artificial sweetener, or drink it black.

At the Smoothie Stand:

- Order a child's size if available.
- Ask to see the nutrition information for each type of smoothie and pick the smoothie with the fewest calories.
- Hold the sugar. Many smoothies contain added sugar in addition to the sugar naturally in fruit, juice, or yogurt. Ask that your smoothie be prepared without added sugar: the fruit is naturally sweet.

Better Beverage Choices Made Easy

Now that you know how much difference a drink can make, here are some ways to make smart beverage choices:

- Choose water, diet, or low-calorie beverages instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- For a quick, easy, and inexpensive thirst-quencher, carry a water bottle and refill it throughout the day.
- Don't "stock the fridge" with sugar-sweetened beverages. Instead, keep a jug or bottles of cold water in the fridge.
- Serve water with meals.
- Make water more exciting by adding slices of lemon, lime, cucumber, or watermelon, or drink sparkling water.
- Add a splash of 100% juice to plain sparkling water for a refreshing, low-calorie drink.
- When you do opt for a sugar-sweetened beverage, go for the small size. Some companies are now selling 8-oz. cans and bottles of soda, which contain about 100 calories.
- Be a role model for your friends and family by choosing healthy, low-calorie beverages.

HOW MUCH SUGAR IS IN YOUR FOOD AND DRINKS

See how much sugar is in your favorite drinks, fruits, snacks, cereals, and more!



