

NUTRITION MATTERS

HEALTHY BEVERAGES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Sugary drinks are everywhere! Pop, fruit juices and drinks, sports and energy drinks, sweetened coffee beverages and many others contain sugar. Too much sugar is not good for our teeth and can take the place of more nutritious foods and beverages. Foods or beverages with added sugar may increase the risk of weight gain and type 2 diabetes.



Choose water

[Canada's Food Guide](#) recommends that water be our beverage of choice. Drinking water is important for our health. Our bodies lose water by sweating, breathing and getting rid of waste so we need to replace what is lost.

Tap water is a great way to stay hydrated and quench thirst without consuming the sugar found in sugary drinks. York Region provides clean, safe and reliable drinking water. Bottled water is more expensive and is not an environmentally friendly choice.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675
TTY 1-866-512-6228
york.ca/nutrition

Test well water for bacteria, chemicals (nitrates) and fluoride level. Testing is offered by York Region Public Health for free or at a private lab, at a fee.

TIPS TO HELP YOU DRINK MORE WATER:

- Drink hot or cold tap water
- Have water with your meals
- Ask for water at restaurants
- Carry a reusable, BPA-free water bottle when you are out
- If you like some fizz in your drink, try carbonated water
- Add sliced fruit or herbs to tap or carbonated water
- Drink water before, during and after physical activity or playing sports
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge or on the table for easy access

You can add flavour to hot or cold water by adding fruits and herbs. Here are some ideas:

- Mint
- Berries, oranges or lemon/lime
- Fresh basil
- Chopped apples
- Pear slices

To get the most flavour:

- Crush the berries
- Chop or tear herbs
- Cut fruit into cubes or slices

CITRUS CUCUMBER WATER

Try this refreshing citrus cucumber water to keep hydrated:

- 1 lemon, sliced
- 1 lime, sliced
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 2 liters of water

Place all vegetables and fruits in a pitcher and add water.



Allow flavours to blend at least two hours before serving in glasses over ice.

Other healthy beverage choices

- Unsweetened lower fat milk
- Unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages such as soy or almond beverage
- Unsweetened coffee and teas

MILK CAN BE A HEALTHY OPTION

Unsweetened lower fat milk is a healthy choice and provides a good source of protein and vitamin D. Sweetened milk like chocolate milk is a sugary drink so it is better to avoid or limit drinking it.

Plant-based beverages can be a healthy option too

Fortified plant-based beverages such as soy, rice, almond or oat beverages can be healthy choices. Read the ingredient list and choose ones that do not have added sugar.

Keep in mind that not all plant-based beverages are created equal. Rice, almond, coconut or oat fortified beverages are not a source of protein and are low in fat and calories. For this reason they are not recommended for young children.

Full-fat, unsweetened fortified soy beverage is the only plant-based beverage that provides similar nutrients to white milk.

Do not offer plant-based beverages to children younger than five (other than full-fat, unsweetened soy beverage) as their main milk source.

Beverages to limit or avoid

SUGARY DRINKS

Sugary drinks, including 100% fruit juice increase the risk of dental decay in children.

Sugary drinks include added and/or naturally occurring sugar from honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates. These sugars are called free sugars. Canada's food guide recommends limiting free sugars to 12 teaspoons a day for adults and even less for children.

Sugary drinks have too much free sugar. Limit these drinks:

- Sweetened plant-based beverages such as chocolate soy beverage
- Sweetened smoothies made with honey, sugar, agave syrup or fruit juice
- Vitamin-enhanced water
- Some flavoured or sparkling waters
- Flavoured milk such as chocolate milk
- Slush type drinks
- Bubble tea
- Fruit punch
- Lemonade and iced tea
- Sports drinks
- Energy drinks
- Soft drinks
- Fruit and vegetable juices
- Some alcoholic drinks
- Hot chocolate and speciality teas and coffees

USE FOOD LABELS

Read a product's Nutrition Facts Table and ingredient list to see how much sugar a product has.

There are changes coming to nutrition labelling in Canada. By 2021, products will be required to list a % Daily Value for sugar.

If the table has more than 15% Daily Value for sugars, it has a lot of sugar.

NEW	
Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
Calories 110	% Daily Value*
	% valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	10 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

New % Daily Value for total sugars

New footnote to help interpret the % Daily Value

The ingredient list is another way to check if the product is high in sugars. The new food label will group all sugar ingredients together in the list. Keep in mind that ingredients are listed in order of most to least on the ingredient list. If sugars are the first or second ingredient, the product is high in sugar.

NEW	
Ingredients:	Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Flour • Vegetable oil shortening • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red
Contains:	Wheat • Egg

Choose water instead of juice

100% fruit juice, including homemade or freshly squeezed juice, is high in sugar, even if it says “no sugar added”. Your body uses all types of sugars the same way, including sugar that is naturally there like in fruit juice. It is best to limit fruit juice. Choose whole or cut vegetables and fruit instead of juice. Choose water instead when you are thirsty.

Sports drinks are rarely needed

For most children and adults, sports drinks are rarely needed. Water is the best choice for hydration before, during and after physical activity.

You may benefit from sports drinks if you do heavy exercise or sports continuously, for more than 45 minutes at a time, especially in hot or humid weather.

Eat protein foods instead of supplements

You can easily get enough protein by following Canada's food guide. Extra protein from supplements like protein bars and powders are not needed. They can be costly and do not have any benefits over a balanced diet.

What about my teeth?

Beverages like soft drinks, lemonade and citrus fruit juices (regular or diet) are acidic.

Germs in the mouth react with sugars in food and drinks to form a mild acid. Over time, this acid can cause cavities in teeth. The more often teeth are exposed to sugar, the more damage it can do.

Healthy beverages for toddlers and preschoolers

12 to 24 months of age – If your child is not receiving breastmilk, offer 500 mL (2 cups or 16 oz) per day of pasteurized, homogenized (3.25% M.F.) cow's milk to help meet vitamin D needs.

Two to five years of age - Offer 500 mL (2 cups or 16 oz) per day of pasteurized, skim or partly skimmed (2% or 1% M.F.) cow's milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage daily to help meet vitamin D needs.

Limit the amount of milk you offer your toddler or preschooler to no more than 750 mL (3 cups or 24 oz) per day. Offer milk in small servings, about 120 mL (1/2 cup or 4 oz) with meals and snacks.

Offer water with or between meals and snacks to help meet their fluid needs. All other beverages, including juice are not recommended.

Offer beverages, other than breastmilk, in an open cup. It is recommended that all beverages are offered using an open cup no later than 18 months of age.

Caffeine

Caffeine can be found in the following beverages:

- Tea and coffee
- Some soft drinks
- Hot chocolate
- Some energy drinks

Caffeine can also be found in foods like chocolate or baked goods with chocolate.

- A cup of coffee has about 135 mg caffeine
- A cup of black tea has 43 mg of caffeine
- A standard can of pop has 36 to 50 mg of caffeine.

Health Canada recommends adults have no more than 400 mg of caffeine per day. For pregnant or breastfeeding women, the maximum amount is 300 mg per day.

Caffeine affects children more than adults due to their smaller body weights. Caffeine should be limited for children.

Maximum caffeine levels for children	
Age (years)	Caffeine in mg per day
Under 4	Do not offer
4 to 6	45
7 to 9	63
10 to 12	85

ENERGY DRINKS

Energy drinks claim to boost energy, and increase concentration. Energy drinks contain a lot of caffeine and sugar. Energy drinks can cause irregular heartbeats and nervousness, especially in large amounts or when mixed with alcohol.

Children and teenagers may be more sensitive than adults to the harmful effects of energy drinks, and therefore they should be avoided by this age group.

It is best for pregnant, breastfeeding women or other individuals sensitive to caffeine to avoid drinking energy drinks.

Energy drinks and exercise



Energy drinks do not help with exercise. They are usually higher in sugar and can cause stomach upset or dehydration during exercise. Water is your best choice during most types of activity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about healthy eating visit unlockfood.ca

To speak with a registered dietitian call Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000.

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