Think about your drink

When we think about making healthy choices, it can be easy to focus only on what we choose to eat and forget about the importance of what we choose to drink. Most popular beverages such as pop, energy and sports drinks, fruit drinks, flavored coffee and sweet tea, have little to no nutrients and also contain a lot of added sugar.

Sugar contains no nutrients and unlike the sugar found in fruit, added sugar does not occur naturally so it is not paired with the vitamins, minerals and fiber that help the body process sugar. This makes drinks that are made up of mostly added sugar a particularly unhealthy choice. It is also easy to consume large amounts of these drinks because they are sweet and tasty, and you don’t have to chew them. The lack of fiber (found in fruit, vegetables and whole grains) also means that these drinks will not make you feel full, making it even easier to have too many.

Children and women should not eat or drink more than 6 teaspoons (24 grams) of added sugar daily, with men consuming no more than 9 teaspoons (36 grams) of added sugar daily. This means that even one can of regular pop would exceed this recommendation because a standard can of regular pop has 40 grams of added sugar.

Water is an essential nutrient

Water should be your first choice when you are thirsty because your body needs water to function properly. By the time you feel thirsty, your body is already a little dehydrated. Water is needed for a variety of processes within the body. It is the basis for fluids such as blood and saliva. It provides lubrication for joints and helps remove waste. Remember that water is also found in many different foods, including fruits and vegetables, but you shouldn't rely on consuming water from these foods to keep your body hydrated.

The Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list found on food products can tell you important information about a beverage. Keep in mind that sugar has many names including anhydrous dextrose, cane crystals, cane juice, corn sweetener, crystal dextrose, crystalline fructose, dextrose, evaporated corn sweetener, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, fruit nectar (any kind), glucose, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), honey, liquid fructose, maltose, molasses, pancake syrup and sucrose.

### Weekly Recipe

**Berry Blast**

Infused Water (serves 8)

1. Add 2 cups of berries and ½ a sliced lemon to ½ gallon of water.
2. Use a spoon to lightly press on the fruit to let out some of the juices.
3. Let sit in the refrigerator for about an hour and enjoy! (If using frozen fruit, you’ll want to let them thaw a little before the flavor will be released.)

### Did you know?

You can tell if you’re properly hydrated by looking at the color of your urine. Dark yellow urine, like the color of apple juice, tells you that your body needs more water. Aim to drink enough water so that your urine is a pale yellow color or clear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Added teaspoons of sugar per serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular soda (20 ounces)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened tea drink (16 ounces)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drink (24 ounces)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (any size)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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