

Regular soft drinks are loaded with sugar. So are many other popular beverages.

Why stay away from sugary drinks?

- **Added sugar is a source of “empty calories”** (calories without nutritional value). One teaspoon contains 15 calories. Not much, you might say. But those calories come without any other nutrients you need for health. And the teaspoons add up fast! A 20-ounce bottle of a typical soft drink has 10-20 teaspoons of sugar.
- **Sugar is linked to tooth decay, heart disease, and weight gain.** Did you know that an extra 150 calories per day equals about 15 pounds of weight gain per year? That’s the number of calories in a single 12-ounce can of regular soda.
- **Calories from liquids don’t fill you up as well as those from solid foods.** Studies have shown that most people don’t eat less to make up for the calories they get from drinks.

What are better choices?

A sugary drink is fine for a treat, once in a while. But choose drinks without sugar most of the time, such as:

- Cool, refreshing water
- Seltzer (plain or flavored) or seltzer mixed with a touch of 100% fruit juice
- Flavored waters, with no added sugar
- Diet soft drinks
- Tea or coffee, without added sugar or flavored syrups
- Small amounts of 100% fruit juice (no more than ½ cup or 4 fluid ounces per day)
 - Like fruit, fruit juice contains nutrients you need for health. But it also contains a lot of natural sugar and calories. And it has no fiber. Whole fruit is rich in fiber and is a better choice. Fiber is filling. It also helps prevent type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.
 - “Fruit drinks” are not fruit juice. Fruit drinks contain lots of added sugar.
- Nonfat or 1% milk, without added sugar
 - Experts recommend that adults drink 2-3 cups per day of nonfat or 1% milk, without added sugar. Whole and 2% milk contain the type of fat that is linked to heart disease.
 - Keep in mind that flavored milks and most commercially prepared smoothies do contain added sugar.
 - Don’t let the Nutrition Facts labels confuse you. The sugar in plain milk comes from the natural sugar in the milk itself, not from added sugar.

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How Much Sugar Do You Drink?

Limit alcoholic drinks.

- Liqueurs and many mixed drinks contain added sugar.
- Alcohol itself is a source of empty calories.
- Too much alcohol is linked to heart disease and obesity. It is also linked to cancer and other serious health problems.
- If you drink alcohol, limit it to one drink per day for women and two drinks for men.

Look at all that sugar!

Take a look at the drinks below. You may be shocked by the amount of sugar!

Tips for reading labels:

- Beware! The Nutrition Facts label lists nutrients per serving. Be sure to look at Serving Size and Servings per Container. Most 20-fluid-ounce bottles contain 2.5 servings. The calories and sugars in the bottle are 2½ times what is on the label.
- The Nutrition Facts label lists “total sugars.” This includes added and natural sugars.
- A gram is a unit of weight. One teaspoon of sugar weighs 4 grams.
- One cup equals 8 fluid ounces. A 12-fluid-ounce can of soda contains 1½ cups. A 20-fluid-ounce bottle contains 2½ cups.

Note: Within each group, the drinks are listed by grams of total sugars.

Soft Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Sprite	12	140	38	10
Coca Cola	12	140	39	10
Pepsi	12	150	41	10
A&W Root Beer	12	180	46	12
Mountain Dew	12	170	46	12
Coca Cola	20	240	65	16
Sprite	20	250	65	16
Pepsi	20	250	69	17
Mountain Dew	20	290	77	19
Sunkist (orange soda)	20	320	84	21

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Energy Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Red Bull	8.3	110	27	7
Arizona Rx Energy	16	200	52	13
Rockstar Energy Drink	16	280	62	16

Fruit Juices and Juice Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Orange Juice, Minute Maid (100% juice)	15.2	220	48	12
Apple Juice, Minute Maid (100% juice)	15.2	220	52	13
Tropical Fruit Fury Twister, Tropicana	20	340	60	15
Lemonade, Minute Maid	20	250	68	17
Fruit Punch, Minute Maid	20	275	73	18
Mango Pineapple Smoothie, McDonald's	22 (large)	350	77	19
Kiwi Strawberry, Arizona	23	345	81	20

Sports Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Powerade Sports Drink and Vitamins B3, B6, and B12 Mountain Berry Blast	20	125	35	9
G-Original Gatorade	32	200	56	14

Milk Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Chocolate Low-Fat Milk, Nesquik	16	240	56	14
Hot Chocolate (with whole milk and whipped cream), Starbucks	20 (venti)	500	63	16
Chocolate Shake, Triple Thick, McDonald's	32 (large)	1,160	168	42

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Tea and Coffee Drinks	Size (Fluid Ounces)	Calories	Total Sugars (Grams)	Teaspoons of Sugar
Iced Tea, Lemon, Nestea	12	120	33	8
Iced Tea, Lemon, Snapple	16	160	46	12
Iced Tea, Lemon, Nestea	20	200	55	14
Green Tea, SoBe	20	250	60	15
Iced Tea, Sweet Tea, McDonald's	32 (large)	280	69	17
Frappuccino, Mocha Coconut (with whole milk, whipped cream), Starbucks Venti	20 (venti)	550	89	22
Frappuccino, Peppermint White Chocolate Mocha (with whole milk and whipped cream), Starbucks Venti	20 (venti)	660	95	24
Caramel MooLatte, Dairy Queen, Large	24 (large)	840	118	30

Take Action

Make a plan below to drink less sugar. *Be specific.*

Examples:

“On Monday and Wednesday, I will buy diet soda, not regular soda, with lunch.”

“When I buy my favorite flavored coffee, I will order a small instead of a medium or large.”



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