



Frequently Asked Questions About Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Is bottled water a healthier choice than tap water?

Despite the large marketing, bottled water is not always safer than tap water. In fact, tap water is subject to more stringent state and federal regulations, meaning that it is held to a higher standard than bottled water. The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) conducts hundreds of thousands of tests per year for over 120 chemicals to ensure that the tap water delivered to your home is clean, safe and high-quality. In addition, unlike water from the tap—bottle water often lacks fluoride, which is essential for dental health. Finally, bottled water contributes to excessive environmental waste, and costs us a thousand times more than water from our faucet.

Is diet soda better than regular soda?

The health benefits of artificial sweeteners which are non-caloric sweeteners in diet soda and drinks are inconclusive. Much of the research is showing mixed findings, that diet soda may not be a healthy substitute for sugary soda.

- For adults trying to wean themselves from sugary soda, switching from regular soda to diet soda may save you calories in the short term; it's not yet clear if it's effective for preventing obesity and related health problems.
- For children, there are no studies on the long-term effects of consuming artificially-sweetened beverages and the possible long-term health consequences of children consuming them are unknown, so it's best for kids to avoid them.

Is the high fructose corn syrup used to sweeten sodas and other beverages a problem?

High-fructose corn syrup is a sweetener added to sodas, fruit-flavored drinks and many processed foods. As the addition of high-fructose corn syrup in our foods increased, so have levels of obesity and related health problems, leading researchers to conclude there is a connection. New research shows that the high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) used to sweeten America's most popular beverages is delivering a larger dose of fructose (a sweeter and more harmful form of sugar), far higher than previously thought. (1) This is of particular concern because of the negative health effects fructose has on the body such as increased risk for diabetes and high blood pressure in addition to the harm done by soda's empty calories. This new research reinforces the practice that we should reduce our consumption of sugar, including high-fructose corn syrup to improve our health and reduce health risks

Are energy drinks a healthy beverage option?

"Energy drink" is a term created by the beverage industry. Energy drinks are not considered to be healthy as they have as much sugar as soft drinks, enough caffeine to raise your blood pressure, and additives whose long-term health effects are unknown. Energy drinks are heavily marketed to children and adolescents, however the Academy of Pediatrics studies show that

Energy drinks contain substances that act as stimulants, and have been linked to a number of harmful health effects in children on their developing neurologic and cardiovascular systems. Energy drinks are not appropriate for children or adolescents.

Does carbonated or sparkling water impact our health?

There are many reports that the fizzy water doesn't hydrate as well as its plain counterpart, causes the erosion of tooth enamel, leeches calcium from bones and is linked to cancer, among other concerns. However, in study reviews of the claims, there's no good evidence that carbonated water cause's harm. (2.) Carbonated water provides the same benefits as its counterpart plain water. In some ways, it has other benefits ,not only does it offer a refreshing change from plain water but it can also help you feel full, perhaps helping to reduce caloric intake. Additionally, drinking carbonated water could help relieve constipation and indigestion for those who do not have acid reflux or irritable bowel syndrome. So if you're one of the many people attempting to cut back on soda by drinking seltzers and sparkling water, drink up, you're doing something good for your body.

Are sports drinks, electrolyte replacement drinks, and vitamin waters healthy beverage options?

Sports drinks and electrolyte replacement drinks do not hydrate better than water, but you are more likely to drink larger volumes, which leads to better hydration that is needed for people participating in vigorous physical activity for one or more hours, such as endurance events. However, most people can sufficiently replace electrolytes lost during moderate physical activity by consuming regular food, drinking water, and do not need a sports drink. In addition, the acidic content of sports drinks can erode tooth surfaces, hastening tooth decay. Vitamin waters are made with distilled water, fructose, electrolytes and vitamins, and some varieties may also contain caffeine. Like sports drinks and electrolyte replacement drinks, vitamin waters can be expensive and are not necessary if one eats a well-balanced diet and is adequately hydrated with plain water.

How does juice compare to soda?

100% fruit juices may provide some key nutrients, such as vitamin C, however juice lacks fiber and can contain as many calories as sodas and other sweetened soft drinks, which contributes to excess calorie intake. The 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend that the majority of fruit consumed should come from whole fruit rather than fruit juice. Daily juice consumption should not exceed the recommended amounts of 4-6 ounces for children and no more than 8 ounces for adults.(3)

What is the difference between the sugar in candy and the sugar in fruit?

Not all sugars are created equal. There is an important distinction between the sugar in candy and the sugar in fruit.

Added Sugars - Foods like candy, baked goods, ice cream, soft drinks, fruit drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks are high in added sugar such as white sugar, high fructose

corn syrup, turbinado or raw sugar – these are all sweeteners. These ingredients are added to foods and beverages as they are processed or prepared and these foods supply *empty calories*—which mean they have few nutrients but lots of calories. When large doses of these types of added sugars are eaten, it can lead to weight gain and poorly controlled blood sugar levels and generally add little or no value to an overall healthy diet.(4)

Natural Sugars-There are only 2 forms of *natural* sugars – the kind found in milk (lactose) and the kind found in fruit (fructose). These types of sugar from a nutritional standpoint have a lot more to offer. Milk and fruit provide other important nutrients like protein, vitamins, calcium, and fiber. As a bonus, fiber and protein take longer to digest, causing a less dramatic rise in blood sugar which can be helpful in preventing type2 diabetes and other chronic illness. They also make you feel fuller for longer, providing a greater satiety and added value to a healthy diet

Does sugar cause diabetes?

The answer is not so simple. Type 1 diabetes is caused by genetics and unknown factors that trigger the onset of the disease; type 2 diabetes is caused by genetics and lifestyle factors. Being overweight and lack of physical activity does increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes, and a diet high in calories from any source contributes to weight gain. Research has shown that drinking sugary drinks is linked to the development of type 2 diabetes. (5) Sugar-sweetened beverages will raise blood glucose levels and can provide several hundred calories in just one serving. The American Diabetes Association recommends that people should limit their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages to help prevent diabetes.

Does soda make people fat?

Research now strongly shows that regular, non-diet sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages contribute to weight gain and to the obesity epidemic. (6) Efforts to reduce the intake of sweetened beverages are essential for preventing and reduce obesity for two reasons. The evidence supporting the association between sweetened beverage intake and excess weight is stronger than for any other single type of food or beverage, and sweetened beverages provide no nutritional benefit other than calories and water. (6) By making the dietary change to reduce the consumption of sugar sweetened soda and beverages, could have a measurable impact on obesity without any negative dietary consequences (7)

Is honey healthier than sugar?

Both honey and sugars are carbohydrate, calorie-dense sweeteners. One tablespoon of white, granulated sugar contains 49 calories, while one tablespoon of honey has 68 calories. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 and American Heart Association recommends “Reduce intake of added sugars”, without singling out any particular types, such as sugar or honey. (8)

Does soda harm teeth?

All sugary foods, including sodas, can cause tooth decay, especially if they are consumed frequently and without regular brushing.

References

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