

NUTRITION MATTERS

HEALTHY BEVERAGES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Have you noticed that sugary drinks are everywhere? Soft drinks, fruit juices, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened coffee beverages can contain large amounts of sugar. When sugary drinks take the place of more nutritious foods and beverages, it can result in poor dental health.

When germs in the mouth react with sugar it forms 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.

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. We need to replace the water that is lost to stay hydrated. 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.

If you use well water, test your well water regularly for bacteria. Private well water testing is provided 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 meals and at restaurants
- Carry a reusable, BPA-free water bottle
- If you like some fizz in your drink, try carbonated water
- Add sliced fruit (berries, cranberries, apples) or herbs (chopped basil or mint)
- 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

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675
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york.ca/nutrition

CITRUS CUCUMBER WATER

Try this refreshing citrus cucumber water to keep hydrated:

- 1 lemon
- 1 orange
- 1 cucumber
- 2 liters of water



Be sure to wash all vegetables, fruits, and herbs before cutting, eating, or using them as a garnish. Slice ingredients, place them in a pitcher and add water. Allow flavours to blend at least two hours in the fridge before serving.

Other Healthy Beverage Choices

MILK

Unsweetened lower fat milk is a healthy choice and provides a good source of protein, calcium 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

Fortified plant-based beverages such as soy, rice, almond or oat beverages can be healthy choices. 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.

For children aged two years of age and older, a full-fat, unflavoured, unsweetened, fortified soy beverage is an option as their main milk source.

If you offer other plant-based beverages to children over the age of two, choose products that are labelled as “fortified” or “enriched” and provide the following per one cup (8 ounces or 250 mL):

- At least 6 g of protein
- At least 23% Daily Value (DV) of calcium (300 mg)
- At least 10% DV of vitamin D (80 IU or 2 mcg)
- Less than 15% DV of sugar (<15 g)

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

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.

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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 (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.

Beverages to Limit or Avoid

SUGARY DRINKS

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

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

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 or 48 grams a day for adults and even less for children.

Some of these drinks include:

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

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	

Read a product's Nutrition Facts Table and ingredient list to see how much sugar a product has. If the table has more than 15% Daily Value for sugars, it has a lot of sugar. The ingredient list is another way to check if the product is high in sugars. All sources of sugar must be listed together as "sugar", followed by the type of sugar added. If sugars are the first or second ingredient, the product is high in sugar.

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.

CAFFEINE

Health Canada recommends adults have no more than 400 mg of caffeine per day. For people who are pregnant, may become pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, the maximum amount is 300 mg per day. Caffeine can be found in beverages and foods like chocolate or baked goods with chocolate.

- A cup of coffee has about 135 mg caffeine
- A cup of black tea has 30 to 50 mg of caffeine
- A cup of hot chocolate has 5 to 13 mg of caffeine
- A standard soft drink in a can has 36 to 50 mg of caffeine

Caffeine affects children more than adults due to their smaller body size. Caffeine should be limited for children. The recommended maximum daily intake from Health Canada for caffeine for children under aged 18 is 2.5 mg per kg of body weight.

ENERGY DRINKS

Children and teens should avoid energy drinks since they are more sensitive than adults to these harmful effects. Energy drinks claim to boost energy and increase concentration. Energy drinks contain a lot of caffeine and often, a lot of sugar. They can cause irregular heartbeats and nervousness, especially in large amounts or when mixed with alcohol.

For those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or are sensitive to caffeine, it is best to avoid 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 york.ca/nutrition

To speak to a registered dietitian at no cost, access Health811 by calling 811 or visiting ontario.ca/health811

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