

The information below may be used as a lesson plan to educate your child(ren). This program is designed for younger children. The purpose of this information is to educate and instill habits that lead to increased physical activity levels and teach valuable nutritional lessons that your child can use throughout their lives.

## Think Before You Drink

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We do not only get sugar from foods we eat. Can you guess what else we get sugar from?

- Drinks.

What are some of your favorite drinks? *Ask your child for examples.*

Let's talk about nutrition and what you drink every day.

- Calories in drinks are not hidden (they're listed on the nutrition label), but many people don't realize just how many calories beverages can contribute to their daily calorie intake.
- A major source of **added** sugar in our diet comes from soda, energy and sports drinks.
- Sugar-sweetened beverages provide excess calories and few other nutrients to your diet. These drinks include caffeine, added sugar and other food additives.

How do you think drinking sugar-sweetened beverages affects your health?  
(*Have your child give his/her answers.*)

- Increased consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks is linked to **tooth decay**.
- Evidence shows that children that consume more sugar-sweetened beverages have **higher body weights** compared to those who drink fewer sugar-sweetened beverages.
- **Obesity is linked to multiple chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.**
- You should **avoid energy drinks** such as Red Bull, Monster and 5 Hour Energy. In addition to added sugar, they contain large amounts of caffeine and can boost the heart rate and blood pressure, dehydrate the body, and, like other stimulants, prevent sleep.

Some foods naturally have simple sugars in them, such as **glucose** that is found in potatoes or **fructose** that is found in fruits and **lactose** founds in milk and yogurt.

On food labels, both naturally occurring and added sugar are included in "sugars" listed on the Nutrition Facts panel.

There are other words that mean sugar. Examples: **Cane Sugar, Corn Sweetener, Corn Syrup, Dextrose, Malt Syrup.**

Let's talk about the sugar that is **added** to the foods and drinks you eat.



How much **added** sugar do you think you should have in a day?

*(Have your children give his/her answers.)*

- **Children ages 4-8** should consume no more than about **4 teaspoons a day**.
- Even when you grow into your **pre-teen and teen years**, you can eat 1800-2000 calories a day, but the maximum amount of **added** sugar in your diet should only be **5-8 teaspoons**.

How much **added** sugar (in teaspoons) do you think most children **really** consume in a day?

*(Have your child give their answer.)*

In one study it showed:

- **1-3** year olds typically consume around **12 teaspoons a day**.
- **4-8** year olds – many have an average of **21 teaspoons a day**.
- When they looked at **14-18** year olds, they consumed an average of **34.3 teaspoons** in a day!
- The average person in America consumes about 355 calories of added sugar a day, which equals to 22.2 teaspoons. That is about triple the recommended amount!

Can you tell me what the best drink is for your body?

- **WATER!** It is good for your skin and digestive system.

A better alternative to sugar-sweetened drinks is water. We need to make sure we drink enough water.

- Drinking water is especially important for before, during and after you are physically active.
- When you participate in sports it is very important you provide your body the fluids it needs to perform properly.
- If we don't drink the proper fluids, we can become dehydrated.

Dehydration can happen **even if it is not hot**, and you don't have to be visibly sweating. You can become dehydrated in the water, at a pool or lake, or even sledding on a winter day.

What are some **warning signs** that we are dehydrated?

*(Have your children give his/her answers.)*

- Thirsty
- Tired
- Breathing faster
- Skin is flushed
- Less Energy

Make sure you pay attention so you increase your fluid intake if you are playing hard or sweating. Getting enough to drink in a day is also important to your growth. You want to make sure you grow up to be strong and healthy.

Now that you know how much difference a drink can make, here are some ways to make smart beverage choices:

- **Choose water or low-calorie beverages** instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- For a quick, easy, and inexpensive thirst-quencher, **carry a water bottle** and refill it throughout the day.
- Do not "stock the fridge" with sugar-sweetened beverages. Instead, **keep a jug or bottles of cold water in the fridge.**
- If you drink juices, dilute them with 50% water.
- **Drink water with meals.**
- Make water more exciting by **adding slices of lemon, lime, cucumber,** or watermelon, or drink sparkling water.
- **Add a splash of 100% juice to plain sparkling water** for a refreshing, low-calorie drink.
- When you do opt for a sugar-sweetened beverage, **go for the small size.** Some companies now sell 8-oz. cans and bottles of soda, which contain about 100 calories.
- Be a role model for your friends and family by choosing healthy, low-calorie beverages.

### **Suggested Activity: Matching Sugar to Its' Drink**

Display examples of sugary beverages. Have bags of various amounts of sugar that match the amount of sugar in each beverage. Have your child match the correct bag of sugar to the beverage it belongs to.

- 1) 32 ounce Coke (Fountain Cup) = 22.75 teaspoons (7 tablespoons + 1 3/4 teaspoons sugar)
- 2) 12 ounce Coke = 9.75 teaspoons (9 teaspoons + 3/4 teaspoon sugar)
- 3) 16 ounce McDonald's Sweet Tea = 9 teaspoons sugar  
(Fountain Cup)
- 4) 16 ounce Sunny D = 6.75 teaspoons (6 teaspoons + 3/4 teaspoon sugar)
- 5) Half Pint 2% Chocolate Milk = 6.25 teaspoons (6 teaspoons + 1/4 teaspoon sugar)
- 6) Half Pint 2% White Milk = 2.75 teaspoons (2 teaspoons + 3/4 teaspoon sugar)
- 7) Recommended Daily Intake  
for 4-8 years old 4 teaspoons