

Re-Think Your Drink

Why Re-Think Your Drink?

The Problem:

More than half of Northern California coast adults and a quarter of the region's youth are overweight or obese and at risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Empty calories from sugar-sweetened beverages, like soda, are a major contributor to this unprecedented obesity crisis.

One Contributor—Sweetened Drinks:

- The average American consumes almost 100 pounds of added sugar a year.
- There are nearly 17 teaspoons of sugar in a regular 20-ounce cola.
- American teens drink almost twice as much soda and sweetened beverages as milk.
- Adults who drink at least one sugar-sweetened beverage a day increase their risk of being overweight and obese by 27%.
- To burn off the calories an average teen boy consumes in sugary drinks (240 calories from one 20 ounce regular cola), he would need to jog for thirty minutes or walk for more than one hour.



Re-Think Your Drink Campaign: Northern California Coast

Who is Behind the Re-Think Your Drink Campaign:

Northcoast Nutrition and Fitness Collaborative (in Napa, Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt & Del Norte counties) is a group of health-related organizations and individuals working to improve the health of primarily low-income Northern Californians.

Campaign Goals:

- Increase awareness of added sweeteners in drinks
- Decrease consumption of sweetened drinks
- Increase consumption of healthy drink options, especially water

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To learn how you can participate in the Re-Think Your Drink campaign, visit the *Network for a Healthy California—Northcoast Region's* web site at www.northcoastnutrition.org & click on the Re-Think Your Drink logo. For more information about the NNFC and the *Network for a Healthy California—Northcoast Region*, contact Jennifer McClendon at (707) 543-5810.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is bottled water a healthier choice than tap water?

Not necessarily. A four-year review of the bottled water industry concluded that just because water comes out of a bottle, there is no assurance that it is any cleaner or safer than water from the tap. Bottled water is not as rigorously regulated as tap water and, unlike water from the tap, often lacks fluoride, which is essential for dental health. Water that comes from your tap costs a lot less than bottled water.

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 contain extremely large amounts of sugar and caffeine, along with some vitamins and herbal ingredients. These beverages are not recommended for children and adolescents because they may cause an elevation in blood pressure.

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

Sports drinks can be healthy options for people participating in endurance events to increase liquid intake, replace electrolytes and provide energy. Most people do not need sports drinks since regular food and beverage intake is sufficient to replace electrolytes lost during moderate physical activity. Vitamin waters are made with distilled water, fructose, electrolytes and vitamins, and some varieties may also contain caffeine. Vitamin waters are high in sugar, are expensive and like sports drinks are not necessary if one eats a well-balanced diet and is adequately hydrated.

How does juice compare to soda?

100% fruit juices have about as many calories as sodas and other sweetened soft drinks, but they also contain vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. It is best to limit the intake of fruit juice and instead eat more whole fruits rich in fiber and nutrients.

Is diet soda better than regular soda?

Diet soda does not contain the sugar and calories that regular soda does, but it is still not considered a healthy drink choice. By drinking diet or regular sodas, you are replacing a healthy drink option with one that provides no nutritive value. Colas and diet colas also contain phosphoric acid, an ingredient that could increase a woman's risk of bone loss later in life.

Is the high fructose corn syrup used in sweetened sodas and other beverages a problem?

High fructose corn syrup flooded the American food supply in the early 1980s, about the same time as the unprecedented rise in obesity rates. Some researchers believe that high fructose corn syrup may have different metabolic effects in the body than other sugars and as a result, corn sweeteners have been accused of being major contributors to the nation's obesity epidemic. However, many experts believe that the real problem with high fructose corn syrup is that it is an especially inexpensive and ever-present form of sugar. High fructose corn syrup is pervasive in the food supply and we are eating too much of it in the form of empty calories in ever-increasing portion sizes.

Does sugar cause type 2 diabetes?

Eating excessive amounts of sugar does not cause type 2 diabetes directly. Many factors are involved in developing type 2 diabetes, some of which include genetics, being overweight, and lack of exercise. Excess sugar intake may contribute to weight gain which may in turn contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes.