



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox Talks

Reducing Sugary Drinks in Your Diet

Rethink your Drink

Take a minute and think about what you drink in a typical day. Unless you are a true water lover, you may be getting some extra, unneeded calories through sweetened soft drinks, sodas, iced tea, coffee, juice, and energy and sports drinks. In fact, sugary drinks are the number one source of added sugars in our diet.

Some research suggests that when you drink calories, you aren't as satisfied as when you eat the same amount of calories in food. This could lead to eating more calories than you need.

How to switch to healthier drinks that will quench your thirst and still taste good!

Read nutrition labels and ingredients – Beverages like energy drinks can be deceiving because they advertise that they are healthy but usually are loaded with calories and added sugars. Common forms of added sugars are sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, syrups, concentrated fruit juice, agave and honey. Look at the label carefully because one container may be more than one serving, which can double or triple the added sugars you're getting.

Cut back slowly – If you have sugary drinks like sodas and sweetened teas on a regular basis, start cutting back now. Mix half sweetened and half unsweetened while you get used to less sugar, and gradually reduce the sweetness.

Choose water – Replace sugary drinks with water. That can seem like a challenge if you aren't a big fan. Here's how to drink more water:

- Carry a refillable water bottle or keep a cup at your desk to make water the easy choice.
- Add slices of your favorite fruits for a boost of flavor.
- Try seltzer or sparkling water if you prefer fizzy carbonated drinks.

Sip a smoothie – When you're in the mood for something sweet or need an afternoon energy boost, skip the coffee and soda and try a budget-friendly homemade smoothie! Blend frozen fruits and veggies with plain, low-fat yogurt, milk or water.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What's the difference between sugar free and no added sugar?

Sugar Free means a serving contains less than .5 grams of sugar, both natural and added. No added sugar means no sugar or ingredient containing sugar was added during processing or packaging.

Discussion Questions:

- What is your favorite sugary drink swap?