

# Wellness Updates

## From Healthy Merits

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## Rethink what you drink

What do you typically drink in a day? Unless it's all water and black coffee, you're likely getting a lot of empty calories through sugary sodas, sweetened teas, blended coffees, and sport and energy drinks. Sugary drinks like these are the top source of added sugars and empty calories in our diet, and can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cavities and weight gain.

**Here are some tips to help you switch to healthier, thirst-quenching drinks that still taste good!**

- **Read nutrition labels and ingredients.** Look at the label carefully because one container may hold more than one serving, which can double or triple the added sugars you're getting. To figure out how many calories are in the whole bottle, you need to multiply the number of calories in one serving by the number of servings in the bottle. For example, if a 20 oz. bottle of soda says it has 100 calories per serving and there are 2.5 servings in that bottle, then you'd multiply 100 x 2.5 to see that drinking the entire bottle means you've consumed 250 calories.
- **Cut back slowly.** If you have sugary drinks such as sodas and sweetened teas on a regular basis, simply start cutting back now. You can start by incorporating unsweetened tea or flavored water into your day so your taste buds adapt to less sugar in your beverages.
- **Choose water.** Switching to water can be challenging for anyone who's used to more flavor, but here are a few ways to make the switch easier:
  - 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, try a budget-friendly homemade smoothie! Simply blend frozen fruits and veggies with plain, low-fat yogurt, milk or water. And remember, if it's store bought and creamy, it's probably high in sugar and calories, so just read the nutrition label.

- **Choose a smaller size.** Smaller portions mean less sugar, so it's okay to sip a small sugary drink as a little treat to your day. But when you need to quench your thirst, go with regular or flavored water, or a cup of black coffee if you need a little caffeine.

## Are you drinking enough water?

*In general, you can follow the 8 x 8 Rule. Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day. You may need less if you drink other beverages (such as coffee) often. You may need more if you exercise or sweat heavily, especially when it's hot outside.*



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## Look and feel your best by simply drinking water

Your body is mostly water (85 percent, to be exact). As a result, you need water for every cellular process. Even a one-percent decrease in required fluids can cause a significant decrease in your functioning. Think of it like oil and gasoline for a car. Your body needs enough fluid to keep everything in good working order.

### The skinny on how water can help you get... skinny

The term *healthy weight loss* refers to a clinically accepted weight loss goal of 1-2 pounds per week. In order to lose that amount by diet alone, the typical person would need to cut roughly 500 calories per day. You can do this by watching your calorie intake and drinking more water throughout the day.

Here are some ways water can help your diet, besides simply being a sugary drink substitute:

- Drinking a glass of water before a meal can prevent you from being ravenously hungry and reaching for high-fat, high-sugar options. If you begin a meal with something in your stomach, you'll be able to make healthier choices. And that can help keep you slim.
- Your body has a hard time understanding the difference between hunger and thirst. Next time you feel hungry, first drink a glass of water and see if your cravings diminish. Your hunger just might be your body's response to dehydration.
- Water helps dissolve food particles and keeps them moving smoothly along your digestive tract. It also helps your kidneys filter out waste particles, preventing kidney stones and allowing you to eliminate all the substances your body no longer needs.

## Knowing the different varieties of sugar

Sweeteners go by many different names and are not always obvious to anyone reading an ingredients list. If you see the following sweeteners in your favorite drink, you'll know that it's a sugary drink with a potentially high calorie count.

- High-fructose corn syrup
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrates
- Honey
- Syrup
- Corn syrup
- Sucrose
- Dextrose





## The 64-ounce challenge

Want to have more energy, less bulge AND less stress? Drinking enough water can do that for you! For this challenge, you simply have to drink 64 ounces of water every day—that's eight ounces, eight times each day.

You can track the total number of 8-ounce glasses of water you consume daily using the chart below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Week 1</b>							
Number of 8 oz. glasses							
<b>Week 2</b>							
Number of 8 oz. glasses							
<b>Week 3</b>							
Number of 8 oz. glasses							
<b>Week 4</b>							
Number of 8 oz. glasses							



## Questions?

We're here to help. For more information, just visit [www.healthymerits.com](http://www.healthymerits.com). You can also call Healthy Merits Customer Service at 1.877.348.4533 or email [healthymerits@meritain.com](mailto:healthymerits@meritain.com).

### Sources:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sugar/rethink-your-drink-reducing-sugary-drinks-in-your-diet>.

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[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/drinks.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html).