



Rethink Your Drink

Stay hydrated and keep sugar at bay

Take a minute and think about what you drink in a typical day. Unless you are a true water lover, you may be packing on many extra, unnecessary calories through sodas, ice teas, and energy or coffee drinks.

Some research suggests that when you drink calories, you are not as satisfied as would be eating the same amount of calories with a solid food. While it may be difficult to break old habits, we've put together a few tips to help you quench your thirst that also taste good!

Read those ingredients

Some beverages, like energy drinks, can be deceiving because they advertise that they are healthy but are usually loaded with calories and sugar. Sugar goes by many names, so when you read a label look for sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, corn syrups, concentrated fruit juice and honey. While you're reading that label, check for serving sizes. Sometimes one container may be considered more than one serving, which can double or triple your sugar consumption.

Cut back slowly

If you have sugary drinks like sodas and sweetened teas on a regular basis, start cutting back on your weekly, and then daily consumption. Some people get bored with plain water, so try replacing with the drink suggestions below.

Spice up your plain, boring water

We often hear we should drink water every day, but that can seem like a challenge if you aren't a big fan. Here's how to boost your water cravings:

- Carry a refillable water bottle or have a permanent glass at your office desk.
- Add slices of oranges, lemons or even cucumbers for an extra boost of flavor.
- Try seltzers or sparkling water with a splash of 100 percent fruit juice.

Join the juicing trend

You may have seen infomercials for juicers or read articles about the benefits of making and drinking your own fruit and vegetable juices. Homemade juices can be OK with some limitations. First, it's always better to eat produce instead of drinking it as you get the fiber from the skin and pulp, which is often strained out by a juicer. Also when juicing, make sure you have plenty of veggies and not just fruit in your blend. It's easy for the calories in fruit juice to add up without even noticing.

Sip a smoothie

When you are in the mood for a milkshake or want an afternoon snack, keep on the heart healthy track with a budget-friendly homemade fruit smoothie! Try this recipe:

- Blend ½ cup frozen fruit with no added sugars, ½ cup plain, low-fat Greek yogurt with no added sugars and ½ cup low-fat milk.

If you don't have a blender, mix small pieces of fresh fruit with yogurt and milk, then freeze for an hour. Experiment with different fruit combinations like mango-pineapple or strawberry-blueberry.

Source: American Heart Association's Simple Cooking with Heart © Program

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