

Kick Sugary Drinks to the Curb!

It's not surprising that excess sugar consumption increases our risk of developing heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, cavities and cancer. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the average Canadian consumes 13% of their total calories from added sugar. Added sugars are defined as sugars and syrups added to food or beverages during processing or preparation. They do not include naturally occurring sugars such as the lactose in milk or the fructose in fruit.



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To minimize the risk of an adverse health event, the Heart and Stroke Foundation recommends limiting added sugar in the diet to less than 10% of total calories. For an average person consuming a 2000 calorie diet, this is less than 12 teaspoons of added sugar per day. In 2014, WHO recommended a further reduction of added sugar in the diet to less than 5%. This translates to less than six teaspoons sugar per day for an average Canadian.

To put this into perspective, one 355mL can of cola provides almost 40 g or 10 teaspoons of sugar. If an average Canadian consumed one can of cola per day, they would exceed WHO's recommendation for added sugar in that soda alone without considering their food intake. **Sugar-laden beverages are the number one contributor of added sugar in the Canadian diet.** These include soft drinks, juice, iced tea, lemonade, energy drinks, sports drinks, and specialty teas and coffees (hot or cold).

It's time to kick sugary drinks to the curb! The best alternative is WATER. Water is essential to our health, is readily available, cheap and refreshing! Water, or sparkling water, can be jazzed up with fruit slices, berries and/or herbs. Here are some winning combinations for fruit infused water:

- Raspberries, lemon & rosemary leaves
- Strawberries, lime & mint leaves
- Blackberries, grapefruit & basil leaves

Sparkling water with a hint of natural fruit flavour is another refreshing option. Look for brands that do not contain artificial sweeteners or added sugar. Good sparkling water brands to try include Dasani, Nestea, Perrier and Blue Menu. A splash of 100% fruit juice can be added to water or sparkling water for additional flavour.

Sugar Content of 10 Common Beverages

Beverage	Size	Sugar content
McDonald's Chocolate Milkshake	Medium (445 g)	26 tsp
Iced Tea (Arizona)	750 mL	18 tsp
Lemonade	590 mL	17 tsp
Rockstar Energy Drink	480 mL	16 tsp
Starbuck's Frappucino (Mocha)	Grande (473 mL)	15 tsp
Tim Horton's Iced Cappucino	Medium (515 mL)	12 tsp
100% Apple Juice	450 mL	12 tsp
Coca Cola – can	355 mL	10 tsp
Tim Horton's Real Fruit Smoothie	Medium (515 mL)	10 tsp
Vitamin Water	590 mL	8 tsp

