

Florida 4-H Consumer Choices

Choosing the Better Beverage

Goal:

The goal is for youth to make informed, responsible choices when selecting a healthy beverage.

Consumer Skill:

Youth will gain knowledge of the following key concepts:

- Selecting a healthy beverage by comparing sugar and sodium content, and reading the nutrition label, can help you choose a smart beverage.

Life Skill:

- Youth will learn decision making skills as they investigate the key concepts and make the best choice.

Suggested

Activities:

- Choosing the Best Beverage (worksheet - p. 7)

Situation

Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. Behaviors of children and adolescents are said to be influenced by many factors. It is essential that children and teens choose healthy drink options when given the opportunity. It is important to keep young people energized and focused throughout the day by providing healthy beverage options. Start with small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy.

It is very important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Drinking when you feel thirsty can help you keep your mind and body healthy. Drinking water is not the only way to stay hydrated. There are many ways, including drinking beverages such as coffee, tea, and 100% fruit juice.

Researchers say that confidence is a learned trait and it is based on knowing the facts and differentiating them from an opinion. By knowing the facts, children and young adults can be more confident in their own beverage choices and not dependent on the opinions of others. This will enable youth to improve their ability to make better choices in general.

This guide will provide hints and tips for making informed decisions when choosing the better beverage.

Key Concepts to Teach

- Definition of Caffeine
- Understanding the Nutrition Label
- Beverage Choices
- Serving Size is Key

References and Sources See Appendix A.



Dietary Guideline Principles

Caffeine Defined

Caffeine occurs naturally in coffee, tea, or cocoa and is sometimes added to beverage products, such as sodas or energy drinks. Caffeine must be listed as an ingredient on the label if it is added to beverages. Beverages with caffeine can be a part of a healthy lifestyle, but think about the calories, sugar, and sodium that the beverages contain.

Your Mini Guide to Nutritious Eating!

The bottom line is who decides what information goes on a nutrition label? In the United States, it's the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). These agencies require that all food labels show the same nutrition and health information. This allows consumers, people like you and me, to compare different beverages and make the choices that are right for them.

The FDA regulates any health claims that companies make on their food labels. When a food says "light" ("lite") or "low fat" on the label, it must meet strict government definitions in order to make that claim. Foods that are labeled "USDA organic" are required to have at least 95% organic ingredients.

The following are examples of food labels found on beverages:



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Reading the Label

Labels provide information to help us decide if an item is nutritious and edible. Checking the labels on drinks is an essential part of making wise and healthy choices. Food labels provide more than just nutrition facts. They also tell you what's in a beverage (i.e., the ingredients). By reading labels of drinks, you may find that the beverage is high in an ingredient like sugar and wish to make a tradeoff on the next drink choice (Gavin, 2011).

Don't just look at the calories:

Yes, it is helpful to look at how many calories are in the items you are about to drink or buy. But there are others factors that indicate if a drink is healthy. Many beverages have large amounts of sugar or sodium.

Limiting sugars:

To build a healthy eating style and stay within your calorie needs, choose foods and beverages with less added sugar. Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared. This does not include natural sugars found in milk and fruits. In order to calculate how many teaspoons of sugar there are in a drink, you need to know there are 4 grams in 1 teaspoon. Careful, the grams of sugar are per serving! You will need to multiple the number of teaspoons by the servings per container to get your final answer.

Shorter is better:

When talking about ingredients, shorter is better! Not having as many ingredients on the label insures a lower chance of artificial additives.

Compare claims to facts:

Companies can label a product with a health claim, so make sure you flip the drink over and read the entire label (not just the attractive words on the front!). Remember, caffeine must appear on the nutrition label, but the *amount* of caffeine is not required.

Serving size is key:

Checking the serving size is important— Is that bottle of soda really 100 calories? Oh wait.. That's for one serving— there are actually two and a half serving sizes with this one bottle of soda, making it really 250 calories. Make sure you look closely at serving sizes and compare them to calorie counts before you buy or consume a product.



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Re-Think your Drink

Water is the best choice, but sometimes we need an extra boost! Energy drinks promise “long lasting energy” and “alertness” to be able to complete tasks. However, these drinks tend to have ingredients that have not been tested for safety and may interact dangerously with medications and pre-existing health issues. Many contain more caffeine than a regular cup of coffee, along with a lot of sugar and empty calories. Consider the following when you choose a drink:

- ⇒ Diet drinks have artificial sweeteners and add little or no calories to your diet. They also have very few or no nutrients and may increase your desire for sweet foods. You want to limit your consumption of artificially sweetened beverages.
- ⇒ Sports and energy drinks may be costly and are really only necessary for a serious athlete during a very intense activity. For most high school athletes, water is recommended as the best way to rehydrate. Sports drinks typically have sugar and sodium. Energy drinks are also very high in caffeine and can have harmful side effects.
- ⇒ Companies promote energy drinks as “healthy” because they contain beneficial ingredients, such as B vitamins. While a deficiency can lead to fatigue, getting more does not lead to increased energy. The body uses what it needs for any water soluble vitamin and simply gets rid of the rest.
- ⇒ Sweet drinks can be disguised with ingredients like corn sweetener, syrup or anything with an “-ose,” like dextrose or fructose. Some drinks that typically have added sugar are energy drinks, soda, fruit flavored drinks, tea, lemonade, and flavored milk. A 20-ounce bottle of cola has about 16 teaspoons of sugar in it.
- ⇒ Caffeine is a drug and can be addictive. Individuals who are addicted to caffeine can suffer from withdrawal if they limit or eliminate caffeine from their diet. Symptoms include headaches, irritability, and insomnia.
- ⇒ Stimulants, including caffeine, affect individuals differently. Too much can lead to nervousness, irritability, insomnia, heart palpitations, convulsions, high blood pressure, and heart attacks **and can interfere** with certain medications, like insulin and blood thinners. How the body reacts to stimulants depends on the person’s gender, weight, and their tolerance level.

Try this activity as you teach youth about drink choices.

Select several different popular drinks and empty out the contents. Have a bag of granulated sugar on hand and allow youth to measure out the amount of sugar into a bowl that is in each of the drinks according to the label. Then compare serving sizes of drinks so they can visualize a typical 8-ounce container versus a 1 cup serving. For full instructions, see the Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness activity in Lesson 1 developed by Cornell University. You can locate this resource and others from the Food Smart Families page of the Florida 4-H website under “Lesson Plans”. http://florida4h.org/programsandevents/_food-smart-families/



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10 tips
Nutrition
Education Series

make better beverage choices



10 tips to get started

What you drink is as important as what you eat. Many beverages contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too much fat and too many calories. Here are some tips to help you make better beverage choices.

1 drink water

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Regular soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sweet drinks usually contain a lot of added sugar, which provides more calories than needed.



2 how much water is enough?

Let your thirst be your guide. Water is an important nutrient for the body, but everyone's needs are different. Most of us get enough water from the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. A healthy body can balance water needs throughout the day. Drink plenty of water if you are very active, live or work in hot conditions, or are an older adult.

3 a thrifty option

Water is usually easy on the wallet. You can save money by drinking water from the tap at home or when eating out.

4 manage your calories

Drink water with and between your meals. Adults and children take in about 400 calories per day as beverages—drinking water can help you manage your calories.

5 kid-friendly drink zone

Make water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or 100% juice an easy option in your home. Have ready-to-go containers filled with water or healthy drinks available in the refrigerator. Place them in lunch boxes or backpacks for easy access when kids are away from home. Depending on age, children can drink ½ to 1 cup, and adults can drink up to 1 cup of 100% fruit or vegetable juice* each day.



*100% juice is part of the Fruit or Vegetable Group. Juice should make up half or less of total recommended fruit or vegetable intake.

6 don't forget your dairy**

When you choose milk or milk alternatives, select low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soymilk. Each type of milk offers the same key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, but the number of calories are very different. Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups of milk per day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.



7 enjoy your beverage

When water just won't do—enjoy the beverage of your choice, but just cut back. Remember to check the serving size and the number of servings in the can, bottle, or container to stay within calorie needs. Select smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.

8 water on the go

Water is always convenient. Fill a clean, reusable water bottle and toss it in your bag or briefcase to quench your thirst throughout the day. Reusable bottles are also easy on the environment.



9 check the facts

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery store. The food label and ingredients list contain information about added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and calories to help you make better choices.

10 compare what you drink

Food-A-Pedia, an online feature available at www.SuperTracker.usda.gov, can help you compare calories, added sugars, and fats in your favorite beverages.

** Milk is a part of the Dairy Group. A cup = 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.



The Better Beverage Decision

Deciding on what beverage you want to drink can be difficult at times and may take a little time and research. Know how much sugar is in the drink, along with sodium, calories, etc.

When making your final consumer decision, you may find it helpful to use a chart similar to the one below to help you make your final decision.

After filling in the columns for each of the factors for various products, consider any additional factors you would like to consider when choosing a snack. i.e. Can you have sugar, sodium or caffeine? Are you monitoring how much you have in one day due to health considerations?

| Beverage | How many calories per bottle/can? | What is the Amount of Sugar? (Grams & Tsp) | What is the Amount of Sodium? (Grams) | Is there Caffeine? (Yes/No) |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |



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Activity: Choosing the Better Beverage

John is studying for a test that he has in the morning. It is only 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and he is already feeling tired. John wants to quench his thirst with something that will give him an extra boost of energy to help him stay focused while studying. However, he has high blood pressure and his doctor has advised him to really limit his caffeine intake. He also is watching his sugar intake. Which drink do you think John should choose?

| Beverage | How many calories per bottle/can? | What is the Amount of Sugar? (Grams & Tsp) | What is the Amount of Sodium? (Grams) | Is there Caffeine? (Yes/No) |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Red Bull | | | | |
| Gatorade | | | | |
| Coke | | | | |
| Water | | | | |



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| Beverage | How many calories per bottle/can? | What is the Amount of Sugar? (Grams & Tsp) | What is the Amount of Sodium? (Grams) | Is there Caffeine? (Yes/No) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Red Bull | 110 | 27 g 6.75 TSP | 105 mg | Yes |
| 2. Gatorade (Orange) | 130 | 34 g 8.5 TSP | 270 mg | No |
| 3. Coke | 200 | 55 g 13.75 TSP | 65 mg | Yes |
| 4. Water (Tap) | 0 | 0 | 0 | No |



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ANSWERS:

4. Water is the best choice since it has zero calories, sodium, caffeine, and sugar content. In addition, tap water is free! However, water may not give John the extra boost he was looking for.

2. Gatorade—It is caffeine-free, which is important for his health. Granted, it does have more sugar than Red Bull.

1. Red Bull—It has caffeine, which John needs to avoid. It has less sugar than Coke.

3. Coke: It has caffeine and the highest sugar content of the four options.



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| NUTRITION FACTS | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Serving Size | 1 can (8.4 fl oz) |
| Calories (Per Serving) | 110 |
| Sodium (Per Serving) | 105mg |
| Sugar (Per Serving) | 27g |
| Caffeine | 80mg/8.4 fl oz |

1.

Photo Credit: <http://jaeti.com/free-red-bull/>



| NUTRITION FACTS | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Serving Size | 1 bottle (591mL) |
| Calories (Per Serving) | 130 |
| Sodium (Per Serving) | 270mg |
| Sugar (Per Serving) | 34g |

2.

Photo credit: <http://www.thefirstbadman.com/item/55/>



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3.



| NUTRITION FACTS | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Calories (Per Serving) | 200 |
| Serving Size | 1 bottle |
| Sodium (Per Serving) | 65mg |
| Sugar (Per Serving) | 55g |
| Caffeine | |

Photo credit: <http://inhabitat.com/cole-announces-global-rollout-of-plant-based-plastic-bottles/>

4.



| NUTRITION FACTS | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Serving Size | 1 cup (8 fl oz) |
| Calories (Per Serving) | 0 |
| Sodium (Per Serving) | 0 |
| Sugar (Per Serving) | 0 |
| | |

Photo credit: <http://www.towerhope.com/drinking-glass-hot-water-every-morning-healthy/>



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Key Terms

- **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder:** (ADHD) “problem of not being able to focus, being overactive, not being able to control behavior, or a combination of these. “ (http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/What_is_ADHD.aspx)
- **Calorie:** “the energy needed to raise the temperature of 1 kilogram of water through 1°C, equal to one thousand small calories and often used to measure the energy value of foods.” (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts#rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=nts&q=what+are+calories>)
- **Cardiovascular Disease:** “class of diseases that involve the heart, the blood vessels (arteries, capillaries, and veins) or both. “ (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts#rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=nts&q=what+is+cardiovascular+disease>)
- **Diabetes:** “a metabolic disease in which the body’s inability to produce any or enough insulin causes elevated levels of glucose in the blood.” (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts#rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=nts&q=what+is+diabetes+>)
- **Dietary:** “of or relating to diets or dieting.” (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts>)
- **Elements:** “a part or aspect of something abstract, especially one that is essential or characteristic.” (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts#rls=org.mozilla>)
- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** “is an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.” (<https://www.google.com/search?q=dietary+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=nts#rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=nts&q=what+is+the+FDA>)
- **Obese:** “Overweight” (<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/info/obesity/>)
- **The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA):** “is a Cabinet-level agency that oversees the American farming industry. USDA duties range from helping farmers with price support subsidies to inspecting food to ensure the safety of the American public.”



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Appendix A

Resources

<http://www.snydersofhanover.com/pretzel-snaps.html>

<http://nutritionbeast.com/2013/10/oreo-cookie-ingredients-nutrition-history/>

<http://www.quakeroats.com/products/oat-snacks/chewy-granola/chocolate-chip.aspx>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/heather-bauer-rd-cdn/nutrition-labels_b_3981345.html

USDA, Center for nutrition policy and promotion. March 2013, 10 tips Nutrition Education Series, Snack tips for parents.

Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness youth curriculum. 2013. https://fnec.cornell.edu/Our_Initiatives/CHFFF.cfm

Florida 4-H Consumer Choices: After School Snack. Prepared by Katherine Marin, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent Duval County and Sara Knollinger, Student Assistant Florida 4-H Eat4Health project.



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