

switchURsip

Frequently Asked Questions

Sugary Drinks

💧 **I have heard that a can of cola contains 9.5 teaspoons of sugar. How does this compare to recommended intakes?**

Yes that's right, a 375mL can of cola does contain 9.5 teaspoons of sugar and a 600mL bottle of cola contains 15.5 teaspoons of sugar.

The World Health Organisation recommends that free sugars - those sugars added to foods including those added to sugary drinks - should make up less than 10% of an individual's daily energy intake.¹ In a practical sense, this is around 12 teaspoons (50.4g) of sugar per day (based on an average 8700kJ diet).

💧 **How are free sugars different to naturally occurring sugars?**

Free sugars are defined by the World Health Organisation as: "sugars added to foods and beverages by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, and fruit juices".¹ These sugars are referred to as 'free sugars'.

In comparison, 'naturally occurring sugars or "intrinsic sugars" are those "incorporated within the structure of intact fruit and vegetables and sugars from milk (lactose and galactose)". These can be referred to as naturally occurring sugars.¹

💧 **What is the difference between fruit juice and fruit drink?**

Both fruit juice and fruit drinks are made from fruit juice, but differ in the amount of fruit juice they contain. Fruit drinks contain some fruit juice with added sugar and water. A 250mL fruit drink popper can contain up to 6 teaspoons of sugar. Fruit juice, with 99% fruit juice or more, naturally contains sugar but also contains vitamins and minerals.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommends a standard serve of **fruit juice** is 125mL or ½ cup – so it is best to limit your intake of these types of drinks.

💧 **I have heard that sports drinks are ideal during/after sports to replace electrolytes. Is this true?**

For elite athletes or those competing in lengthy physical activities of over 90 minutes (i.e. marathon running), sport drinks may be useful in providing performance benefits from replacement of electrolytes.² However, these drinks contain high quantities of sugar and salt and using them for usual hydration purposes or modest physical activity is not recommended.³

Sports drinks have a high energy content and acidity. Regular consumption of these drinks can lead to adolescents being above a healthy weight and may lead to dental related health problems.³

Water is the best option for during and after sport.

💧 **What about diet drinks, are they any better?**

Diet drinks contain no sugar as they are artificially sweetened. These drinks include diet soft drinks, diet cordials, sugar free energy drinks and diet sports drinks. There is limited evidence to suggest

that these drinks have an impact on maintaining a healthy weight, however, although these drinks are promoted as a 'healthier alternative' they still contain high levels of acid which may lead to dental health problems when consumed frequently.³

💧 I have heard there is sugar in milk?

Yes, there is sugar in milk, but this sugar is naturally occurring in the form of lactose. Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is important for growing kids. The latest research suggests only 10% of Australian children⁵ are getting their recommended intake of calcium for healthy growth and development, so it is important that they consume at least 3.5 serves of dairy foods (preferably reduced fat) every day. Only 19.7% of adolescents are consuming at least 1.5 cups or more (1.5 serves) of milk a day.³

💧 How do I know how much sugar is in what I drink?

You can see how much sugar is in your packaged drink by looking at the nutrition information panel on the drinks label.

- 💧 Start by looking at the serving size.
- 💧 Compare the serving size to the size of the drink you are having.
- 💧 Read the quantity of sugar (in grams) listed in the panel and multiply the 'per serve' amount based on the size of the drink you are drinking.
- 💧 Grams can be changed into number of teaspoons by dividing the total amount of sugar per serve by 4.2 (i.e. 1 teaspoon of sugar = 4.2g).

Alternatively, look at the ingredients list. All ingredients must be listed in order, from largest to smallest by weight. If sugar is first on the list, the drink may contain a large amount of sugar. Look for ingredients ending in '-ose' as these are names manufacturers use to list sugar i.e. sucrose, maltose etc.

*Note: sugars in ingredients list include both 'free sugars' like sugar added to soft drink and 'naturally present sugars' like naturally occurring lactose in milk.

You can get an average of how much sugar you drink by using the switchURsip Sugary Drinks Calculator at <http://goodforkids.nsw.gov.au/high-schools/switchursip/sugary-drinks-calculator/>.

Tips

Cutting back on sugary drinks?

- 💧 **Avoid** the sugary drinks aisle, so there is none available at home.
- 💧 Have **water available** at home at all times – keep a supply of cold water in the fridge.
- 💧 Take small steps to cut down on sugary drinks slowly – for example, step 1 - make it a habit not to have sugary drinks when eating out, step 2 - remove sugary drinks from home.
- 💧 Make it a **challenge** with friends and family not to consume sugary drinks.
- 💧 Get **creative** and make new ideas of infused water or sparkling water. Try different combinations of fruits, vegetables and herbs.
- 💧 **Limit** your intake of fast food. Research shows us that if you eat more fast food, you drink more sugary drinks.
- 💧 If the thirst hits, **make a habit** of always drinking a big glass of iced water first before reaching for a sugary drink.

Keeping water cold in heat?

Nothing quenches thirst more on those hot summer days than an icy cold glass of water.

Some tips to keep your water bottle cool include:

- 💧 Freeze a drink bottle the night before – on a hot summer's day it will gradually defrost giving you a constant supply of iced water.
- 💧 Store water bottles in a cooler lunch bag.
- 💧 Use a reusable thermos regulated drink bottle – limiting your plastic use is good for the environment too!
- 💧 Add pieces of fruit/veggies like berries or cucumber slices to feel refreshed in the heat. The fruit can be frozen too!

Washing water bottles and water bottle hygiene?

Having a water bottle on hand can be great and can help increase your water intake through the day. However, they can get quite dirty without realising it.

Ensure you keep your water bottle clean.

Some water bottle washing tips include:

- 💧 Purchase a reusable dishwashing friendly drink bottle and use the dishwasher
- 💧 Soak drink bottles in warm soapy water and rinse
- 💧 Rinse your water bottle out with 1/5 white vinegar, dilute with water and let stand overnight. Ensure you rinse the vinegar out properly before the next use!

References:

1. World Health Organisation, 2015
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/149782/1/9789241549028_eng.pdf
2. Sports Dietitians Australia, 2009
<https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Sports-Drinks.pdf>
3. NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition (2009)
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/Publications/soft-drinks-report.pdf>
4. NHMRC 2013 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/n55>
5. School Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey, 2015
6. Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, 2013