



Sugary Drinks Facts

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) are drinks (carbonated or not) that contain added sugar, such as the following:

- Soda pop or soft drinks
- Fruit drinks (e.g., ‘punches’, ‘cocktails’ or ‘-ades’)
- Energy drinks
- Sports drinks
- Flavoured or vitamin-enhanced waters
- Flavoured milks (e.g., chocolate, strawberry, milkshakes)
- Sweetened plant based beverages (e.g., almond, rice or soy)
- Specialty teas and coffees
- Hot chocolate
- Sweetened smoothies

Did you know?

Sugary drinks are the single largest contributor of sugar in the diet.ⁱ A single 355 mL can of sugar-sweetened soda contains up to 40 grams (about 10 teaspoons) of sugar and no health benefits.ⁱⁱ

Children need healthy beverages like milk and water as they grow. Unfortunately, as children get older, they consume soft drinks more often, which bump out these healthy drinks.ⁱⁱⁱ This increases their intake of sugar, which can have a negative impact on their health!

How drinking too many sugary drinks can affect your health

1. Poor nutrition: Sugary drinks contain mostly sugar and water. They provide calories but little, if any, nutritional value.
2. Tooth decay: Sipping sugary drinks, especially ones high in acid (e.g., sports drinks or pop) can lead to tooth decay. Sugary drinks mix with bacteria in the mouth to produce acid. Acid erodes enamel, which can lead to cavities. Diet drinks may not contain sugar but they do contain acid.
3. Displace healthier beverages in the diet: When the frequent choice is a sugary drink instead of milk or water, it can affect the intake of important nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D. Some research suggests that people who drink this “liquid candy” do not feel as full as if they had eaten the same calories from solid food and do not compensate by eating less.
4. Weight gain: Greater intake of sugary drinks is linked to increased energy intake and other health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes.

Key stats on Canadian children and youth intake of sugar sweetened beverages

- Increased consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) has been identified as a potential cause for the increase in obesity.^{iv}
- In 2009-2011 nearly one-third of Canadian children and youth were overweight or obese.^v
- Beverages make up almost 20% of the calories consumed by children and youth aged 4 to 18. Canadian children who have high intakes of SSB have been shown to have lower intakes of nutritious drinks such as milk and water.^{vi}
- Product placement and decorative packing have strong influence on children and consumer's choices. Many food and beverage companies deliberately target children through the use of cartoon images, bright packages, and colours.^{vii} Restrictions on marketing to children have been cited as one of the most cost effective approaches to reduce childhood obesity.^{viii,ix}

The bottom line

Offer your child a variety of whole foods like plain vegetables and fruits every day, and healthy drinks like water, plain milk and unflavoured fortified soy beverage for hydration. This gives them the important vitamins and minerals needed for healthy growth and development.

To find out which drinks children should choose 'every day' or 'sometimes' and which they should 'avoid' check out the [Guide to Making Healthy Drink Choices](#) .

- To offer Sip Smart!™ Ontario in the classroom visit: www.brightbites.ca
- To promote healthy drinks in your community visit: www.brightbites.ca/sip-smart-ontario-community

Adapted from materials created and developed by the BC Pediatric Society.



ⁱ Yang Q, Zhang Z, Gregg WE, Flanders WD, Merritt R, Hu FB. Added sugar intake and cardiovascular diseases mortality among US adults. *JAMA Internal Medicine* Published online February 3, 2014.

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization. WHO opens draft consultation on draft sugars guideline: note for media. March 5, 2014. Retrieved from: www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2014/consultation-sugar-guideline/en

ⁱⁱⁱ Garriguet D. Beverage consumption of children and teens. *Health Matters* 2008; 19(4):1-6.

^{iv} Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Addressing obesity in children and youth: evidence to guide action for Ontario. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013.

^v Roberts KC, Shields M, de Groh M, Aziz A, Gilbert JA. Overweight and obesity in children and adolescents: results from the 2009 to 2011 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Health Rep.* 2012;23(3):37-41.

^{vi} Statistics Canada. Beverage consumption of children and teens. 2008. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2008004/article/6500820-eng.pdf>:

^{vii} Elliot C. Entertaining Eats: children's "fun food" and the transformation of the domestic foodscape. *Material Culture Review* 2009;70.

^{viii} Magnus A, Haby MM, Carter R, Swinburn B. The cost-effectiveness of removing television advertising of high-fat and or high sugar food beverages to Australian children. *International Journal of Obesity* 2009;33:1094-1102.

^{ix} Haby MM, Vos T, Carter R, Moodie M, Markwick A, Magnus A, Tay-Teo KS, Swinburn B. A new approach to assessing the health benefit from obesity interventions in children and adolescents: the assessing cost-effectiveness in obesity project. *International Journal of Obesity* 2006, 30:1463-1475.