



MIDDLESEX COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ronald G. Rios
Chairman

David A. Papi
Director

(732) 745-3100
Fax (732) 745-2568

TIP SHEET

Rethink Your Drink



PLAIN WATER:

Plain water is an excellent option to maintain regular hydration. It is recommended that the average person drink eight, 8 ounce glasses of water a day. It's important not to wait until you feel thirsty to hydrate. The best thing to do is to continually drink fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated.



ENHANCED WATER: There are many waters on the market that are “enhanced” in some way, be it with flavors, fiber, vitamins, or minerals. Be careful to consider the added calories and the serving size when choosing flavored water. Some have as many as 40 - 60 calories per serving which equals 100 – 150 calories per bottle and next to no nutritional value. Also consider that most of these enhanced beverages have no evidence to support their claims to “defend and protect,” help you relax, help you de-stress or invigorate your body, etc.



SPORTS DRINKS: Sports drinks contain carbohydrates, electrolytes and some salt. Athletes who engage in strenuous workouts or sporting activities will benefit from these types of drinks to restore the electrolyte balance in their bodies. For the general public who engage in moderate to strenuous activity for less than an hour, plain water is the best source of fluids. For optimal performance in these circumstances, drink a few glasses of water before your activity, one during to quench thirst, and several after to rehydrate.



SODA: “Carbonated soft drinks are the single biggest source of calories in the American diet, providing about 7 percent of calories; adding in noncarbonated drinks brings the figure to 9 percent. Teenagers get 13 percent of their calories from carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks.”* It's best to choose diet soda or to keep regular soda consumption to a minimum. Soda adds many calories to your diet with no nutritional value. A typical 20 oz bottle of soda contains 17 to 21 teaspoons of sugar which can equal close to a half cup! Diet soda uses artificial sweeteners and usually contain zero calories; however, it too has no nutritional value.



MILK: There is no reason for anyone over the age of 2 to drink whole milk. Whole milk has the highest fat content of all milk products and, as such, should be consumed sparingly. A better option is to drink non fat, 1% or 2% milk. All contain the same vitamins and minerals with less fat than the whole milk counterpart. Milk products are an important part of daily diet as they contain calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Phosphorus and Zinc.



JUICE: Most fruit juices are made with added sugars and as little as 10% real fruit juice. The best option is a juice that contains 100% fruit juice. Anything less adds calories and little nutritional value. One tip to consider is that if the juice is advertised as a punch or an 'ade' it probably doesn't contain 100% fruit juice. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 1 and 6 should only drink about 4-6 oz (1/2 cup) daily and older children should limit juice consumption to 8-12 oz (1-1/2 cups) daily.



SMOOTHIES: Be sure to look at the label if you are calorie conscious. There are a wide variety of prepared yogurt smoothies with a range of nutritional value and caloric content. If looking for a snack try something 100 calories or less. If replacing most or all of a meal, look for the larger calorie content but beware of fat grams. If making a smoothie at home, try blending fresh fruits with fat free or low fat ice cream and/or fat free/low fat milk. For a slush consistency with less calories, blend a small amount of water, ice, and fresh fruits of your choice.



COFFEE/TEA: Be careful to note the additional calories when adding sugar, half and half, cream, whole milk, flavored creamers, etc. to your daily coffee/tea. Just one packet of sugar can add 25 calories to what started out as a calorie free beverage. Try using an artificial sweetener and low fat/skim milk to cut down on fat and calories.

*(Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks Are Harming Americans' Health, Michael Jacobson, PhD, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Washington, D.C, June 2005. Access at: www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/liquid_candy_final_w_new_supplement.pdf).