

# Choose Healthy Drinks

The drinks we choose can affect our health and weight. Healthy drinks help us to get fluid and nutrients. For adults, a general recommendation is to drink 9–12 cups (2.25–3 L) of fluid per day.



## How to choose healthy drinks

- Choose water and low fat milk most often.
- Cut back on drinks with added sugar and fat.

### Water

Water is a great way to satisfy your thirst. Use the tips below to help you choose water most often.

- Take a water break instead of a coffee break.
- Carry your own water bottle for a refreshing drink anytime, anywhere.
- Add lemon, lime, or cucumber slices for a different flavour.



### Milk

Milk provides calcium, vitamin D and protein to help maintain healthy bones.

- Choose skim, 1% or 2% milk. [Canada's Food Guide](#) recommends that adults drink 2 cups (500 mL) each day.
- Flavoured milks, like chocolate milk, are higher in sugar and calories than plain milk. Limit these drinks.



### Plant-based beverages

Many people choose plant-based beverages to drink. Unsweetened fortified soy beverages also provide calcium, vitamin D, protein, and are considered a milk alternative.

Drinks like almond, coconut, hemp, or rice beverage are low in protein and not considered milk alternatives on Canada's Food Guide. If you drink these, choose one that is unsweetened and fortified or enriched with calcium and vitamin D.



For more information visit:

[healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search for *Plant Based Beverages*.

### Vegetable and fruit juice

100% fruit juice contains some vitamins and minerals, but also has about the same amount of sugar and calories as sugar-sweetened pop. If you drink juice, choose 100% unsweetened juice, or juice your own vegetables and fruit.

**Limit juice to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.**

## What makes drinks less healthy?

Less healthy drinks contain added sugar and/or fat. These drinks may be higher in calories and can contribute to weight gain and poor health. Calories from these drinks add up quickly and do not make you feel full. After having a high calorie drink, most people don't eat less at their next meal.

## Limit drinks with the following:

### Added Sugar

Some drinks that may have added sugar are pop, sports drinks, energy drinks, coffee drinks and specialty waters (such as vitamin water).

There are also products that look like juice but are called “drink”, “beverage”, “punch”, “-ade”, or “cocktail.” These contain mostly water, sugar and flavouring. Read the ingredient list on the package. Sugar may be listed under different names such as:

- Fructose, glucose, maltose, sucrose
- Agave or corn syrup
- Evaporated cane juice
- Liquid sugar



### Fat

Fat such as cream and whipping cream, can often be found in specialty coffee and cream-based drinks. These fats are not heart healthy and add calories. Instead, choose lower fat milk for these drinks.



## What about caffeine?

Limit your caffeine intake to 400 mg or less per day. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding limit to 300 mg caffeine per day. One cup (250 mL/8 oz) of coffee contains about 100 mg of caffeine. Some teas, iced teas, energy drinks and pop can also contain caffeine.






## What about alcohol?

Alcoholic drinks provide you with sugar, alcohol, and calories. If you drink alcohol, follow [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#).

Women: Limit to 2 drinks per day (maximum 10 drinks per week).

Men: Limit to 3 drinks per day (maximum 15 drinks per week).

One drink is:

Beer	Wine	Liquor
1 can	1 glass	1 shot
12 oz (355 mL)	5 oz (150 mL)	1½ oz (45 mL)
		

**Caution:** If you have a medical condition, alcohol may not be safe for you, even in small amounts. Check with your doctor about whether or not you should drink alcohol. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, the safest choice is not to drink alcohol.

## Sugar substitutes

Sugar substitutes are sweeteners that contain little or no sugar and calories. Examples of sugar substitute names on the ingredient list include: acesulfame potassium, aspartame, stevia, and sucralose. They may be found in low calorie drinks such as sugar-free pop, vitamin waters, and flavoured water drops. These drinks are not necessary for good health and should not replace healthy drinks like water and milk.

Look for words like “diet”, “zero calorie”, or “sugar-free” to identify these products. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or dietitian before using drinks containing sugar substitutes.

# Sugar and Calories in Common Drinks

The table below shows the amount of sugar (in teaspoons) and calories in the serving of some common drinks. **Note:** The sugar and calories will change depending on the serving size you choose. When choosing drinks, use the tips on page 1 and 2 to compare and make healthy drink choices.

**1 tsp (5 mL) sugar = 4 grams sugar**



Drink type	Drink	Serving size	Teaspoons of sugar per serving	Calories
Water	Tap water	1 cup (250 mL)	0	0
Milk	Skim milk*	1 cup (250 mL)	3	88
	2% milk*	1 cup (250 mL)	3	129
	1% chocolate milk	1 cup (250 mL)	8	188
Plant-based beverages	Unsweetened soy beverage*	1 cup (250 mL)	1	85
	Vanilla almond beverage	1 cup (250 mL)	4	96
	Unsweetened rice beverage*	1 cup (250 mL)	6	122
	Unsweetened coconut beverage*	1 cup (250 mL)	0	49
100% juice	Orange juice*	1 bottle (450 mL)	13	232
	Tomato juice*	1 can (284 mL)	2	60
Unsweetened drinks	Black or herbal tea	medium (425 mL)	0	0
	Black coffee	medium (425 mL)	0	0
	Unflavoured latte (2% milk)*	medium (473 mL)	5	190
	Fruit and yogurt smoothie*	regular (720 mL)	15	260
Sugar-sweetened drinks	Flavoured latte (2% milk)	medium (473 mL)	9	250
	Hot chocolate (no whipped cream)	medium (425 mL)	14	300
	Regular pop	1 can (355 mL)	11	150
	Sport drink, 1 bottle	1 bottle (500 mL)	8	130
	Slush	1 large (946 mL)	31	453
	Energy drink (with fruit juice)	1 can (473 mL)	8	140
	Milkshake (vanilla), medium	medium (650 mL)	32	720
	Fruit beverage	1 bottle (451 mL)	16	230
	Flavoured iced coffee, whipped cream and caramel sauce	medium (473 mL)	6	215
Alcohol	Red wine	1 glass, 5 oz (150 mL)	1	127
	Beer	1 can (355 mL)	3	153
	Hard liquor	1 ½ oz (45 mL)	0	98

\*These drinks contain only naturally occurring sugars.