

Beverages and body weight

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. This is one of the specific recommendations of the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 released by the USDA and DHHS at the end of January.

Sugary drinks have a huge impact on our eating patterns. If you add up sodas, sports and energy drinks, and tea and fruit juices with added sugar, they account for about 50% of the total amount of added sugars we consume. Added sugars are those that do not occur naturally in foods. Naturally occurring sugars include fructose in fruits and lactose in milk products.

On average, Americans drink about 18 ounces of regular soda per day. That translates to about 225 calories (15 teaspoons of sugar) per day. In one month that's 7,000 additional calories (440 teaspoons sugar) and 2 pounds of body weight. In a year that would add up to 24 extra pounds of body weight.

In a review of 88 research studies on soda, experts found a clear link between soda consumption and weight gain. The scientific evidence also shows that soft drink intake was associated with lower intakes of milk, calcium, and other important nutrients and with an increased risk of several medical problems including diabetes.

Calories from soda are particularly good at putting on the pounds. Scientists believe that beverage calories bypass our body's weight regulating system. In other words, when we eat extra calories, we automatically compensate by eating less food later in the day. When we drink calories in high-sugar beverages (including soda and also fruit juices, sweetened iced teas, and alcoholic beverages) we tend NOT to eat less food later in the day, so the calories pile up.

For weight management, sugar-free drinks may be a better choice than sugar-sweetened beverages, but some research suggests that artificial sweeteners increase appetite. Additional rigorous studies are needed. In the meantime, water, sparkling water and naturally calorie-free beverages like teas and coffee are the best choices for weight loss. A wedge of lemon, lime or orange is a great way to brighten up the flavor of water if you don't like drinking it plain. Drink up!

The new Dietary Guidelines and background information are available at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>

Recipe of the Week : Gram's Waffles

Makes 6 waffles – a family favorite for more than 50 years

½ cup each whole wheat flour and white flour
1 Tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, separated
2 Tablespoons canola oil
1 cup low-fat or fat-free buttermilk for waffles
1 cup blueberries or chopped apple, if desired

- Sift together flours, sugar, baking soda, baking powder and salt.
- In a large bowl beat egg yolks. Mix in oil and buttermilk.
- Add sifted dry ingredients and mix.

- In a small bowl, beat egg whites till soft peaks form. Fold into batter with a spatula.
- Add fruit if using.
- Spray waffle iron with non-stick cooking spray if needed, and preheat.
- Cook and eat while they're hot!
- Enjoy plain, with jam or with fresh or frozen berries and a dollop of yogurt.
- To make 12 Pancakes, increase buttermilk to 1 ¾ cups.

Nutritional Information per waffle:

Calories: 161 Total fat: 6.4g Saturated fat: 1g
Carbohydrates: 19g Fiber: 1.5g
Protein: 6g

Tip of the Week Prepare for your workout the night before by packing your gym bag. If you work out at home, lay out your workout clothes and equipment so when you get home, you're ready.
From exercise.about.com