

# How to Drink Healthier

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Last Updated: May 25, 2021

Many people pay attention to calories and nutrition from food sources. Unfortunately, this means some people neglect to consider their liquid intake. If you want to drink healthier, alter your everyday drinking habits. Opt for low calorie beverages and drink mostly water. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation and go for low calorie options. Always read nutrition labels carefully. Be on the lookout for hidden calories and sugars.

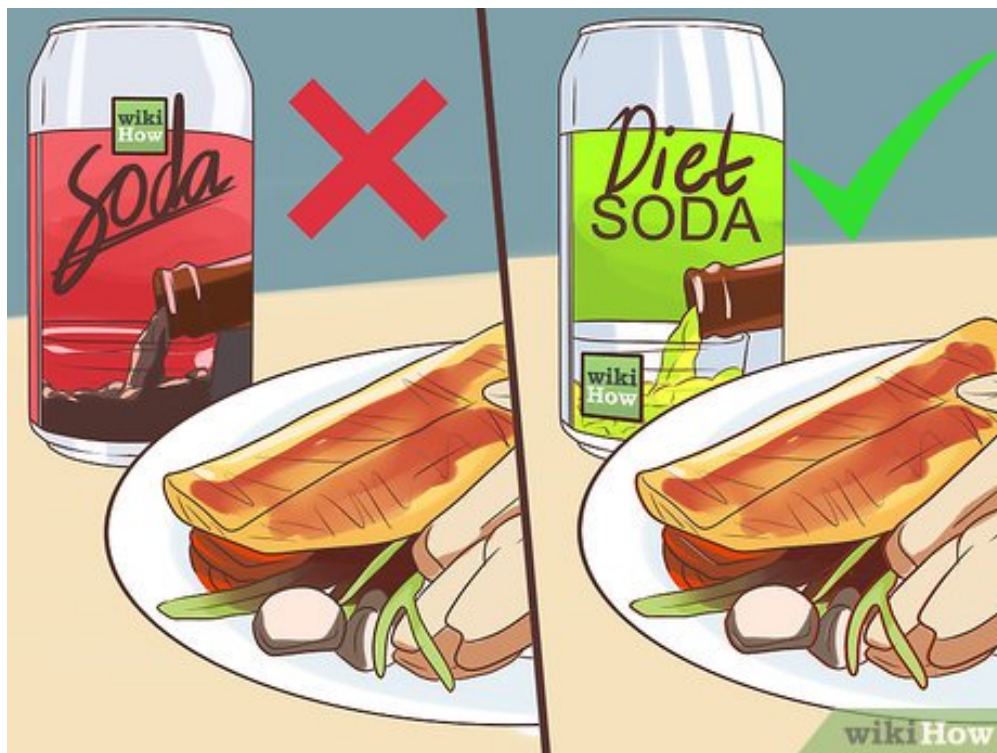
## Method 1

### Method 1 of 3: Selecting Healthy Everyday Drinks



**1 Prioritize drinking water.** If you're thirsty, opt for water most of the time. Water quenches your thirst better than other beverages and has no calories and carbs. Proper hydration is also important to overall health.<sup>[1]</sup>

- Have water when eating out or at home. It can help to store cool water in your fridge so it's easy to pour a cold glass of water with a meal.
- If you want to liven up regular water, infuse it with fruits or herbs, such as mint. For example, you could place slices of strawberries in regular tap water.
- Staying hydrated throughout the day can help fight the urge to drink unhealthy beverages. Make a point of carrying a water bottle with you wherever you go.



**2 Make small changes to your favorite beverages.** Notice where your beverage calories tend to come from. For example, do you frequently have a latte as a pick-me-up after work? Do you drink soda with lunch or dinner? Tiny tweaks can eliminate calories, making your drink choices healthier.<sup>[2]</sup>

- If you drink sugary sodas or ginger-ale, opt for diet and sugar-free varieties. This greatly reduces calories and sugar.
- Going for smaller sizes can also help. Ask for a small latte rather than a medium one, for example. You can also tweak some of the ingredients. Request fat-free milk, for instance.



**3 Do not add sweeteners to coffee and tea.** Coffee and tea only have a few calories per cup. However, calories can be added on fast when adding things like sugar and other sweeteners. Try to drink coffee and tea black or opt for **low-calorie sugar substitutes** if you're a coffee drinker.<sup>[3]</sup>



**4 Opt for healthier juices.** Fruit juices are often not as healthy as they appear. They're often high in added sugars and even juices without added sugar are high in calories and overall sugar content. Instead of drinking juice straight, pour a splash of juice into seltzer water. This creates your own sparkling juice with less calories and sugar.<sup>[4]</sup>

- For healthiest results, go for juices without added sugars and limit your intake to 4 oz (120 ml) a day.

**5 Drink more milk.** Milk is a high protein beverage that contains beneficial vitamins and minerals, such as calcium and vitamin D. Adults can enjoy up to three 8 oz (240 ml) cups of milk a day for optimal health.<sup>[5]</sup>



**6 Limit your intake of certain beverages.** Some beverages should be consumed rarely, if ever, due to their poor effects on health. The following beverages should not be a staple of your diet:[6]

- Sugar-sweetened soda, fruit punches, fruit juices, sweet tea and powdered drink mixes provide little nutrition and a lot of extra calories and sugar.
- Energy drinks are packed with sugar and caffeine, which can lead to a spike in blood pressure.
- Sports drinks do contain electrolytes, which can be helpful after a workout in some cases, but are usually too packed with added sugars to be healthy. You should only drink them if you engage in very high intensity workouts of at least 60 minutes and, even then, drink them in moderation.

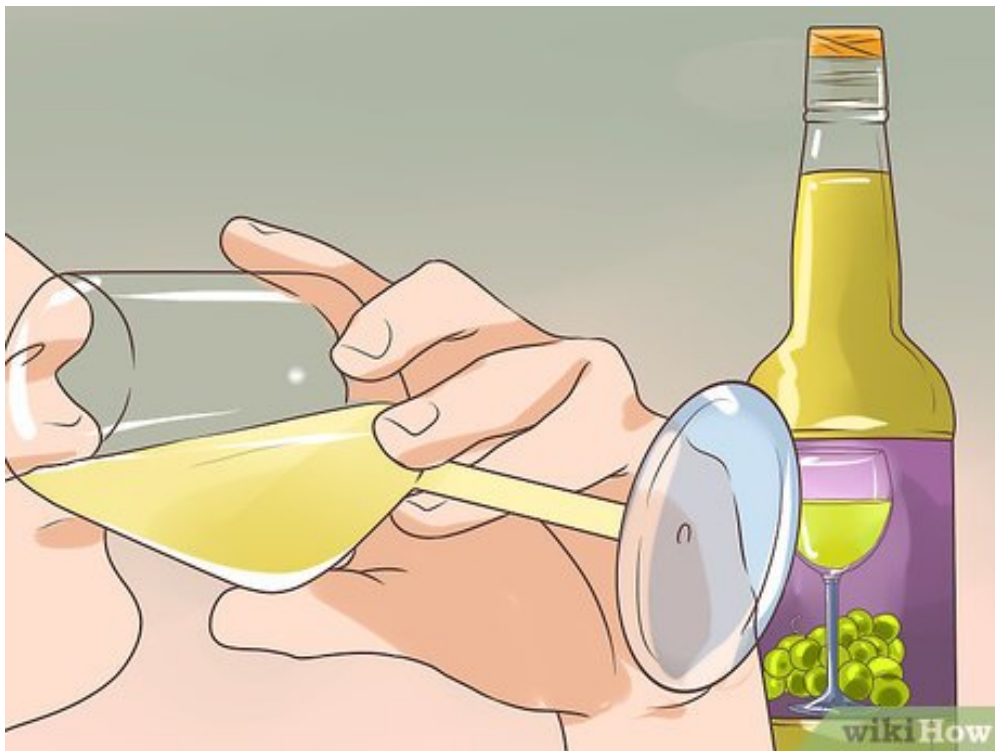




- 1 Strive to drink in moderation.** If you opt to drink alcohol, drink in moderation. This means no more than one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men.<sup>[7]</sup>
  - A drink is defined as 12 ounces (355 milliliters) of beer, 5 ounces (148 milliliters) of wine, or 1.5 ounces (44 milliliters) of distilled spirits.



- 2 Avoid mixers with liquor.** If possible, you should opt to drink liquor neat. Mixers, such as juice and soda, often contain a lot of extra calories and sugar. Drinking liquor straight is a low-calorie option to have a drink at the end of the day without it being too unhealthy.<sup>[8]</sup>
  - If you dislike the taste of straight liquor, go for flavored seltzer water or diet sodas as mixers.



**3 Opt for wine when possible.** Wine is a low-calorie, low-carb option. If you dislike hard liquor, go for a glass of wine instead to reduce your caloric intake. Wine also may have health benefits due to its antioxidants. While studies are inconclusive, there is some evidence wine can lower bad cholesterol levels.<sup>[9]</sup>



**4 Drink light beers only.** Beer is generally not a healthy option as it's high in calories and carbs. If you do drink beer, stick to one or two beers. Always go for light beers, which are lower in overall calories.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Method 3 of 3: Avoiding Common Mistakes



**1 Be aware of misleading calories on nutrition labels.** Nutrition labels on beverages are often misleading. While the calorie and sugar content on, say, a bottle of apple juice may look low, check the serving size. It's possible the serving size is only a portion of the bottle. You may find there are two to three servings in a single bottle, doubling or tripling the calorie content.<sup>[11]</sup>

- Make a habit of always looking for the serving size on a drink you're purchasing.
- While you may buy a bottle of apple juice intending to only drink one serving, it can often be too tempting not to down the entire bottle. If you're not sure you can avoid the temptation, opt for a smaller bottle of juice.



**2 Watch for hidden sugars.** Read the ingredients list for hidden sugars. While a beverage may appear to be low sugar, it may be loaded with products that are essentially the same as sugars. Watch out for the following on nutrition labels:<sup>[12]</sup>

- High-fructose corn syrup
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Honey
- Sugar
- Syrup
- Corn syrup
- Sucrose
- Dextrose
- Evaporated cane juice





**3 Ask questions when ordering drinks out.** Don't be afraid to ask about ingredients when ordering things like smoothies and juices when eating out. You want to make sure you stay healthy at all times.<sup>[13]</sup>

- Ask about ingredients like milk at coffee shops. If possible, ask for fat-free or soy milk instead.
- When ordering things like fruit smoothies, ask about added sugar. Request a smoothie be served without added sugar whenever possible.
- Ask about the smallest sizes and whether it's possible to order a child's size.



**4 Eat before drinking alcohol.** If you're going to drink alcohol, do not avoid eating first to minimize caloric intake. Not only can be it dangerous to drink on an empty stomach, as you'll become intoxicated faster, alcohol will lower your inhibitions. If you drink while very hungry, you may end up binging on unhealthy foods later on.<sup>[14]</sup>



## Tips

- Obtain **nutrition** from whole foods, such as grains, legumes, vegetables and nuts.

## References

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Co-authors: **20**  
Updated: **May 25, 2021**  
Views: **15,768**

Categories: **Water Health Benefits | Drinks**

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