

Fitness Focus

What should you drink?

Soda: Soda is a source of “empty calories”. This means that it doesn’t provide any real nutrition for your body and has the potential to cause excess weight gain (can lead to obesity). When people drink soda, they usually don’t drink enough healthy beverages like water or milk.

Juice: 100% juice can be a healthy part of a person’s diet and can provide important vitamins like Vitamin C. A problem with juice is that it is easy to drink too much. The American Dietetic Association recommends that boys and girls between 7 and 18 years old drink no more than 8-12 ounces (a small glass) of juice per day.

Juice shouldn’t be used as a fruit substitute. People should aim to eat at least 2-3 servings of fruit per day. Aim for a wide variety of fruit in your diet. Fresh fruit, canned fruit without sugar added or frozen fruits (for smoothies) are healthy choices.

Juice and Tea Drinks: Juice drinks are fruit flavored beverages that have very little real juice in them. Sunny Delight, Capri Sun, Hawaiian Punch, Kool-Aid, Arizona Teas and Snapples are examples of juice and/or tea drinks. These drinks have as much (or more) sugar than soda and should be limited.

Sports Drinks: Sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade were invented for professional athletes. They are useful for athletes that are active for more than an hour. Sports drinks contain sodium and potassium—these are electrolytes that are lost when the athlete is sweating. They also contain sugar. This sugar can be useful when the athlete’s event takes more than an hour.

When sports drinks are consumed outside of long sporting event, they are like soda; empty calories.

Energy Drinks: Energy drinks are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. This means the makers of the drink can put ingredients in them without checking first to see if they are safe.

Drinks like Red Bull, Monstor, Rock Star have large amounts of caffeine in them. Caffeine can be dangerous because it increases heart rate and blood pressure.

Some energy drinks contain ephedrine (ma huang). When ephedrine is combined with caffeine, it can cause deadly heart problems. *Energy drinks also have a lot of sugar in them, which can lead to obesity.*

LESSON REVIEW: Answer questions in complete sentences and on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What are empty calories?
2. What is the importance of 100% juice and the recommended daily amount?
3. List 5 fruits that you like to eat.
4. What are the possible effects of too much caffeine?
5. Describe a possible effect of drinking too many high sugar drinks.