

SUMMER REHYDRATION AND DRINKS TO AVOID - *By Tricia Talerico, D.C., MS, Nutr.*



In these hot days of summer we all look for something cool, refreshing and “sweet”? The problem with sweet drinks is that they can contain hundreds of grams of excess sugar. There are, however, plenty of great options that are not detrimental to your health and waistline. Let’s first look at some of the drinks to avoid.

1. Soda – Whether it’s diet or regular, both have their downfalls. Diet soda usually contains aspartame and research shows that it can cause brain tumors, birth defects, Type II diabetes, epilepsy/seizures and even emotional disorders. Any type of soda contains phosphoric acid, known to cause osteoporosis and softening of your teeth. Soda also contains benzene, a known carcinogen, in levels much too high for human consumption.

2. Beer – In addition to the damaging effect on your liver and adding empty calories to your diet, the yeast in beer can trigger the production of uric acid. Not only do high uric acid levels cause gout, but they can also cause high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney disease.

3. Sweet tea or sweetened teas can contain up to 22% pure sugar!

4. Wine Coolers – Besides the wine, these drinks also contain lots of fruit juice and sugar, sometimes even aspartame.

5. Iced Coffees and Frappes – As delicious as they taste, they all contain sugar, HFCS and even artificial sweeteners.

Some popular coffee drinks can contain up to 100 grams of sugar, 2.5 times the amount of sugar an adult should consume in one day!

6. Sports Drinks - Although very popular and believed to restore your electrolyte balance in the heat or during exercise, they contain high amounts of sugar and too much sodium. They often contain high-fructose corn syrup or artificial sweeteners and are 30 times more erosive to teeth than water.

Although these are only a few of the worst popular summer drinks, let’s look at a few healthier and delicious alternatives.

1. Sparkling mineral water. Add lemon or lime juice, liquid stevia or cucumber slices for a great taste.

2. Iced green tea. You can sweeten it up with liquid stevia.

3. Chilled red or white wine (in moderation). Organic is always best.

4. Coconut water or “dew from the heavens” contains great amounts of electrolytes, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants and phytonutrients. It is low in sugar but has a mild sweet taste. Other great benefits from coconut water include its anti-inflammatory properties, anti-aging properties, promotion of proper digestion and even its use as a remedy for constipation and diarrhea.

So, instead of reaching for the same old summer drinks, stop and try something new and better for you. Your health and your waistline will thank you!

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