

# Rethink Your Drink

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*The average American drinks 39 to 50 gallons of SSBs containing 9 to 12 pounds of added sugar per year.*

Americans have a huge appetite for sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and our waistlines, wallets and landfills can prove it. Half of all Americans drink sugar-sweetened beverages every day. The World Health Organization, the American Heart Association and other groups urge us to “Rethink your drink!”

## Trends

The average American drinks 39 to 50 gallons of SSBs containing 9 to 12 pounds of added sugar per year. Regular soda is the most frequently consumed SSB. Energy drinks, specialty coffees, teas and flavored waters are becoming more and more popular. Originally, soft drinks were 6.5 ounces. Today, the average size is 20 to 24 ounces, and fountain drinks may be even larger.

## What’s in Your Drink?

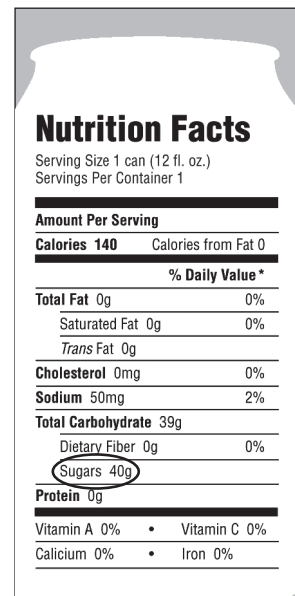
Look on the nutrition label!

1. What is the serving size?
2. How many grams of sugar does it have?
3. What ingredients are in your drink? Ingredients are listed by weight, from most to least. Check the ingredient list.

Added sweeteners

can go by many names, including sugar, high fructose corn syrup, fruit juice concentrate, fructose, sucrose, glucose, cane sugar, crystalline fructose or honey.

Be an informed consumer and know what you are buying and drinking.



**Nutrition Facts**  
Serving Size 1 can (12 fl. oz.)  
Servings Per Container 1

| Amount Per Serving            |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Calories 140</b>           | Calories from Fat 0 |
| % Daily Value*                |                     |
| <b>Total Fat</b> 0g           | 0%                  |
| Saturated Fat                 | 0g 0%               |
| Trans Fat                     | 0g                  |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg        | 0%                  |
| <b>Sodium</b> 50mg            | 2%                  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 39g |                     |
| Dietary Fiber                 | 0g 0%               |
| <b>Sugars</b> 40g             |                     |
| <b>Protein</b> 0g             |                     |
| Vitamin A 0%                  | Vitamin C 0%        |
| Calcium 0%                    | Iron 0%             |

**How much sugar is in your drink?**  
grams (g) of sugar ÷ 4 = teaspoons of sugar  
*Example:*  
40 g ÷ 4 = 10 teaspoons of sugar  
**Check the number of servings per container!**

– continued –

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## Impacts of SSB Consumption

Drink choices have a big impact on personal health, finances and the environment.

- **Health:** Overconsumption of SSBs, more than any other food or beverage, is associated with unhealthy weight. SSBs have accounted for at least 20 percent of Americans' weight gain in the past 30 years. They are also linked to higher risks of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, gout and certain cancers. Sugars and acids in drinks often lead to costly dental problems. When SSBs replace nutrient-rich milk and foods, additional problems may occur, such as poor bone health. Health problems linked to drinking too many sugary beverages lead to huge costs to individuals, health care organizations and society at large.
- **Finances:** Consuming SSBs can be a drain on a household budget. Buying soda and other beverages is expensive. The average American household spends \$850 on soft drinks each year. This is a total of \$65 billion dollars nationwide and does not account for other SSBs, such as juice drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, or sweetened coffee and tea beverages.
- **Environment:** Think about the environmental costs of Americans' sugar-drinking habits. These facts may surprise you. Did you know . . . ?
  - A household of four can generate 1,460 pieces of garbage a year if each member discards just one SSB bottle a day.
  - Americans throw away 35 billion plastic bottles each year.
  - The volume of plastic thrown away annually around the world is enough to circle the earth four times.
  - Americans represent 5 percent of the world population, but create 30 percent of its garbage.
  - Aluminum cans and plastic bottles can take 200 to 500 years or up to 1,000 years respectively to degrade in a landfill.

Drink containers often end up in landfills or along roadsides. These impacts affect our

neighborhoods, communities and beautiful state. Simply switching to reusable water bottles or non-disposables can eliminate the trash and save on environmental costs.

## Making Choices

Take a pledge now to help others rethink their drink. Be a role model in your family, community and club organization. Encourage your children, family and friends to try these simple tips:

- Talk with your family about SSBs and their negative health, financial and environmental impacts.
- Make note of day-to-day habits and monitor your progress. Children like to track their choices on a refrigerator chart.
- Drink water and milk with meals.
- Keep a dispenser of water or ready-to-go reusable water bottles handy.
- Make plain water interesting and tasty with slices of favorite fruits, cucumber, mint, etc.
- Dilute juice with sparkling water.
- When you do opt for a sweet drink, go for the smallest size.
- Read labels. Every 4 grams of sugar equals 1 teaspoon. You may be surprised when you read the ingredient list, too.
- Think about drinks as part of your overall diet. Choose drinks that nourish your body.

Make every sip count. Improve your health, budget and the environment by choosing water and low-fat milk instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

## More Information

WVU Extension Service, [fh.ext.wvu.edu/food/recipes/beverage-recipes/fruit-infused-water](http://fh.ext.wvu.edu/food/recipes/beverage-recipes/fruit-infused-water).

California Department of Public Health, [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICRethinkYourDrink.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICRethinkYourDrink.aspx).

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