

# Healthy Drinks, Healthy Kids

Drinks help children and youth to get the fluids they need to keep their bodies working well.

## How much do 2–18 year olds need to drink?

Different amounts of fluid are needed depending on age and gender. See the table below.

Age in years	Recommended amount of fluid to drink daily	
	Girls	Boys
2–3	4 cups (900 mL)	
4–8	5 cups (1200 mL)	
9–13	6 cups (1600 mL)	7 cups (1800 mL)
14–18	7 cups (1800 mL)	10 cups (2600 mL)

Sometimes a child may need to drink more fluid. This includes; in hot weather, when they're active, or not feeling well. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

## Everyday drinks

Water and milk can be enjoyed every day. Offer water most. Serve milk or a fortified soy beverage every day as recommended by Canada's Food Guide.



### Water

Offer water during the day to meet fluid needs and to quench thirst.

- Plain water without anything added is best.
- A child can refill a personal water bottle all day long.

### Milk or fortified soy beverages

Try offering milk at meals or snacks. Children and youth need 2 cups (500 mL) of milk (skim, 1%, 2%) or fortified soy beverage every day. These drinks provide protein, calcium, and vitamin D. 9–18 year olds may drink more milk to help them get the nutrients they need.



If choosing soy beverage as a milk alternative, read the Nutrition Facts table on the label and choose one that provides:

- at least 30% Daily Value (DV) of calcium and vitamin D
- less than 10 grams of sugar per 1 cup (250 mL)
- at least 6 grams of protein per 1 cup (250 mL)



## Sometimes drinks

These drinks have higher amounts of sugar (natural and/or added) and may be lower in some nutrients. *Sometimes* drinks may have some nutrients, but water, milk, and fortified soy beverages are healthier choices.

### Flavoured milks or flavoured fortified soy beverages

Flavoured milks and fortified soy beverages, such as chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, or other flavours have the same nutrients as milk or fortified soy beverage, but contain added sugar.

### 100% juice

Offer vegetables and fruit to eat instead of juice because:

- vegetables and fruit contain fibre
- 100% vegetable juice may contain added salt
- 100% fruit juice is high in natural sugars

If offering juice, limit to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.



### Coconut water

Coconut water is not the same as water because it contains different amounts of minerals like sodium and potassium. Some types of coconut water have 100% fruit juice, fruit puree, or sugar added.

### Plant-based beverages

Beverages made from plants such as rice, almond, coconut, oat, potato, and hemp may be fortified or enriched with calcium and vitamin D. These are not considered a milk alternative like fortified soy beverage because they are much lower in protein and energy than cow's milk.

If offering a plant based beverage, read the Nutrition Facts table on the label and choose one that provides:

- at least 30% Daily Value (DV) of calcium and vitamin D
- less than 10 grams of sugar per 1 cup (250 mL)
- at least 6 grams of protein per 1 cup (250 mL)

## Drinks to limit

These drinks are not healthy choices because they are low in nutrients, high in sugar and/or fat, and may contain caffeine or sugar substitutes.

### Fruit drinks, iced tea, pop, or slushes

These drinks may be high in added sugars or contain sugar substitutes. A fruit “ade”, “beverage”, “cocktail”, “drink”, or “punch”, may have little or no actual fruit juice.

Iced tea, pop and slushes may contain caffeine. Pop has acids in it that can weaken tooth enamel.



### Vitamin waters

Vitamin waters are flavoured waters with added vitamins, minerals, caffeine, herbs, sugars or sugar substitutes. Healthy food and drinks contain the same vitamins and minerals added to these drinks. Choosing healthy food will provide these nutrients, plus many more.



## Sports drinks

Sports drinks contain sugar, added sodium, and potassium. They are not needed for most activities.

**Water is the best choice during and after regular activity.** For information on when a sports drink might be needed and how to choose one, go to [www.healthyteatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyteatingstartshere.ca) and search for: “Sports Nutrition”.



## Energy drinks

Energy drinks are **not recommended** for children and youth because of their high levels of caffeine and sugar, as well as other added ingredients, such as vitamins and herbs. For more information visit [www.healthyteatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyteatingstartshere.ca) and search for: “The Energy Drink Buzz”.



## Specialty coffee and tea drinks

Many hot and cold coffee or tea drinks are made with flavoured milk, cream or whipped topping, and syrups, making them higher in fat and sugar. They may also contain caffeine or sugar substitutes.



## How to choose a drink

When choosing a drink look for one with;

- no added sugars,
- no caffeine,
- no sugar substitutes,
- lower amounts of naturally occurring sugars.

### Sugar

A child who drinks lower sugar drinks has less risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight. Children and youth at an unhealthy weight may have a higher chance of getting some types of cancers, heart disease, or type 2 diabetes.

Choose healthy foods and drinks instead of drinks with higher amounts of natural or added sugar.

Some names for sugar on the drinks’ ingredient list are:

- cane juice/extract
- corn syrup/solids
- dextrose
- fructose
- fruit juice, purées and concentrates
- glucose
- honey
- liquid sugar
- maltose
- molasses
- sucrose
- syrup

### Caffeine

Caffeine is found in coffee-based drinks, energy drinks, tea, iced tea, pop, and other drinks. Some side effects of caffeine are; nervousness, faster heart rate, and problems sleeping. Choose drinks without caffeine. Caffeinated drinks are often high in sugar and low in nutrients. Visit

[www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca) and search for “Caffeine and Kids” for more information.

### Sugar substitutes

Drinks sweetened with sugar substitutes often have few nutrients and may take the place of healthy food and drinks. Sugar substitutes are not recommended for children unless a healthcare provider suggests them. Some names of sugar substitutes on the drinks’ ingredient list are:

- acesulfame potassium
- aspartame
- polydextrose
- sorbitol
- stevia
- sucralose
- xylitol

## Read the product label

Use the ingredient list and Nutrition Facts table to compare drinks.

### Ingredient list:

Check the ingredient list to see if there is added sugar, caffeine, or sugar substitutes. Ingredients are listed in order of what was used the most to what was used the least to make the product.

**Ingredients:** carbonated water, glucose-fructose, sugar, sodium citrate, caffeine








### Nutrition Facts table:

Read the Nutrition Facts table to find the serving size and the grams of sugar in the serving. Grams of sugar include naturally occurring and/or added sugars. 4 grams of sugar is about 1 tsp of sugar.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Per 250 mL	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 140	
<b>Fat</b> 0 g	<b>0</b> %
Saturated 0 g	<b>0</b> %
+ Trans 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 20 mg	<b>1</b> %
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 35 g	<b>12</b> %
Fibre 0 g	<b>0</b> %
<b>Sugars</b> 35 g	
Protein 0 g	
Vitamin A	0 %
Vitamin C	100 %
Calcium	0 %
Iron	0 %

Compare products and choose the one with less sugar. The drink above has 35 grams or about 9 tsp of sugar in 1 cup (250 mL).

## Did you know?

Drink	Tsp or grams of sugar
	<b>Water</b> Any size = 0 tsp or 0 grams
	<b>Milk</b> 250 mL (1 cup) = 3 tsp or 12 grams (natural sugar)
	<b>Fruit drink</b> 591 mL bottle = 18 tsp or 72 grams
	<b>Vitamin water</b> 591 mL bottle = 8 tsp or 32 grams
	<b>Sports drink</b> 710 mL bottle = 10 tsp or 40 grams
	<b>Energy drink</b> 473 mL can = 14 tsp or 56 grams
	<b>Iced coffee drink</b> 414 mL = 12 tsp or 48 grams (natural and added sugar)