

Liquid Calories

Many beverages contain sugar, fat, and alcohol, which can be major sources of calories. For weight control, it is better to eat food calories rather than drink them.

Water is the best beverage choice. Here's why:

- It's an essential nutrient.
- It has zero calories.
- It's the best thirst-quencher.
- It's easy on the wallet.
- It's convenient.
- Water helps you stay satisfied and feel full.



Low-fat (1%), fat-free (skim) milk or fortified soymilk are the next best options.

- 3 cups per day is the recommended amount.
- Refer to the “Dairy” MOVE!® Handout for additional information.

If water or milk doesn't satisfy you:

- Try making water more exciting by drinking carbonated water or adding slices of lemon, lime, watermelon, or cucumber, which add flavor with few calories.





- Add a splash of 100% juice to plain sparkling water for a refreshing, low-calorie drink.
- Add flavor using tasty zero-calorie flavor powders to tap or carbonated water.
- Choose a “diet” beverage sweetened with artificial sweeteners instead of sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Enjoy the beverage of your choice in moderation on special occasions.

Ways to reduce caloric intake from beverages:

- When thirsty, think “water first” instead of caloric beverages.
- When eating out, order water with meals instead of caloric beverages.
- When eating at home, serve water or low-calorie beverages with meals.



- Do NOT “stock the fridge” with sugar-sweetened beverages. Instead, keep a jug or bottles of cold water in the refrigerator.
- For a quick, easy, and inexpensive thirst-quencher, carry a water bottle and refill it throughout the day instead of drinking sugar-sweetened beverages.
- When you do opt for a sugar-sweetened beverage, select smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.
- If you want to drink a large portion of a beverage, choose water or a beverage with zero calories.

- Remember that liquid calories can add up quickly. Always check the Nutrition Facts Label and be aware of the calories in one can, bottle, or container of a beverage.



Here are healthy alternatives:

Choose These...	Limit These...
Diet soda	Regular soda
Unsweetened tea, or with artificial sweetener	Sweet tea
Coffee, unsweetened	Coffee with sugar
100% fruit juice with no added sugar (limit to 8 oz or less per day)	Fruit drink, cocktail, or punch
Water or carbonated water with natural fruit flavorings	Sugar-sweetened energy or sport drinks
Diet lemonade	Lemonade
Low-fat yogurt, low-calorie fruit smoothie	Milkshake
Low-fat (1%), fat-free (skim) milk, or fat-free half-and-half	Whole milk, 2% milk, half-and-half, creamer



To lose weight, avoid the empty calories of alcohol, eat whole fruit rather than drinking fruit juice, and drink water instead of energy or sport drinks. Check the calories on everything you drink, including smoothies, specialty coffee drinks, and juices.