

You Are What You Drink

You may be getting plenty of exercise, watching what you eat and counting those calories carefully. But did you know that more than twenty percent of your daily calories could be coming from what you drink?

The number of calories in drinks sweetened by added sugars compared to those in naturally sweetened drinks is almost identical. An 8-ounce serving of cola, on average, contains 93 calories and fruit punch has 104. The same serving of orange juice contains 102 calories, while apple juice has 107. All these drinks contain similar amounts of sugars.

The following beverages are being compared to water (0 calories); coffee and tea (5 calories per 250 mL); 1% milk (110 calories for 250 mL) and orange juice (60 calories in 125 mL).

Coffee Drinks

Mochaccino or iced coffee drinks (300 mL or 10 oz) usually have over 250 calories. The syrup flavor alone has 80 calories and you may want to think twice about the whipped cream. If you absolutely must have your fancy coffee fix, make sure to get it with skim or 2% milk. The Verdict: Coffee drinks deserve their reputation as an adult milkshake.

Individual juices

Juices sold in convenience stores typically come in 473 mL (16 fl oz) or 591 mL (21 fl oz) bottles. Believe it or not, the calories ring up quickly. A bottle of orange juice is 225 calories and the larger bottle of apple juice is just less than 300 calories. To put this in perspective, that's more calories than a can of soda. When it comes to drinking juice, one glass to start the day is more than enough. The Verdict: The sugar and calories in large juices rarely justify the "fruit" status.

Sports Drinks

Some sport drinks come in large "individual serving size" bottles. One brand has almost 800 mL with 250 calories. On the bright side, there is some sodium and some potassium, which may be helpful if you have worked up a sweat in humid weather. This drink also has about 60 ml (4 tbs) of sugar. The Verdict: If you need an extra 250 calories, fine. If not, drink water after a workout.

Sweet Fruit Juices

Grape juice and cranberry "cocktail" are two popular beverages, which carry the same calories and sugar as a soft drink. When purchased in 475 mL bottles, there are 290 calories or more. In the case of grape juice, it's naturally sweet; cranberry cocktail has sugar added to the same level as a soft drink. So although you may think you're getting a better nutritional value, you may just as well go for a can of soda. The Verdict: Split a bottle of grape or cranberry cocktail over a few days.

Cocktails

Let's get right down to the numbers. A Pina Colada rings in at a hefty 260. Rum and eggnog has 330 calories and the trendy chocolatini comes in with a whopping 440 calories. The alcohol, sweet mixes and fat in the coconut mix, eggnog and cream liqueur, all provide extra calories. That's one thing few

of us need at this time of year.

The Verdict: Enjoy alcohol in moderation and skip the high sugar and fat mixes.

How to avoid calories in drinks

- Have diet mixers in drinks.
- Have light beer and lager.
- Avoid sugary and rich creamy drinks.
- If having wine have it with low calorie tonic water or diet lemonade this will dilute the alcohol and reduce the calories available.
- Have fresh fruit juice as a mixer if available.

The problem is usually not one high calorie drink, but rather the number of high calorie drinks consumed each week. Is it three, five, or maybe more? Think about you how you might enjoy an extra 750 calories per week. Choices could include three of these drinks, something more nutritious, or perhaps a completely different small indulgence.