

[CHAPTER 5]

Drink the **right** beverages.



Although I wrote this book to educate and guide you in the healthiest way to eat, I would be completely remiss if I didn't offer some guidance on beverages. At this time, beverages constitute a whopping 22 percent of the total daily calories consumed in America. This glaring statistic underscores just how crucial it is to do your beverages right.

As you will learn in a moment, what you choose to drink can have a profound impact on your health and your body weight. To maximize your liquid intake, I'm going to walk you through the beverages you need to dump and the beverages you need to gulp. We'll cover the drinks you need to dump first.

THE DRINKS YOU NEED TO DUMP

All Sugary Drinks

Of all the things you can do to improve your wellness and meet your weight goals, dumping your liquid calories likely offers the single greatest return for your efforts. Over the past several years, liquid calories, especially sugary beverages, have emerged as the most fattening or weight-boosting of all types of calories. Whether you are partial to soda, sports drinks or fruit drinks, each time you quench your thirst with one of these popular beverages, you consume calories derived entirely from sugar. These liquid sugars have a very high glycemic response because they can bypass the digestive process altogether and zip straight into your bloodstream as a flash flood of glucose and fructose. The fallout from these notorious “twin peaks” is metabolic stress that can have far-reaching consequences throughout the body.

How Sugary Drinks Make Us Fat

Tragically, sugary beverages are now the number one source of calories in the toxic US diet. Scientific studies consistently link the intake of sweet beverages to weight gain, obesity, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. In fact, sugary beverages tend to be particularly obesigenic because they lack physical bulk and do not suppress the appetite to the same degree as solid-food calories. They simply do not fill the stomach and elicit the cascade of hunger-suppressing signals that solid foods do.

Every sip of these sweet beverages immediately raises blood glucose and blood fructose levels. This “double-whammy” triggers hunger and promotes fat storage. Lastly, drinking rather than chewing provides less opportunity for satisfying the cravings of your mouth and makes it considerably easier to take in excess calories quickly and effortlessly.

Indeed, sugary beverages provide a perfect storm of easy calories that do nothing to satisfy your hunger. Consider this: if you drink one 16-ounce soda daily (that's 200 calories) over and above the calories you expend, you will gain 20 pounds in one year. Stated another way, if you stop drinking that 16-ounce bottle of soda and otherwise maintain your current level of calorie intake, you can lose up to 20 pounds in one year.



The unique propensity of sugary beverages to promote weight gain has been well-documented in the research. In a report from the Harvard Nurses' Health Study, investigators followed the drinking habits of over 51,000 women from 1991 to 1995. Over the four-year period, study subjects who increased their intake of sugary beverages to one or more a day increased their calories by 358 per day. This same group gained over 10 pounds over the four-year study interval.

When we drink sugary beverages, we simply do not compensate for these liquid calories by eating less food. Scientists from Penn State fed 33 adult subjects lunch with a non-caloric beverage like water or a caloric beverage like soda.

The researchers determined that people consumed just as much food when they drank soda and ultimately consumed 128 to 151 more calories at the lunch test meal versus the exact same test meal served with water. They also found that the larger the beverage serving size, the more the study subjects drank. So, take note: those unlimited soda refills frequently offered in restaurants are a surefire recipe for weight gain.

Lastly, a recent landmark clinical trial determined how changes in liquid calories affect body weight, and I hope the results will spur you to dump sugary beverages once and for all. Known as the "PREMIER Trial," this study confirmed that reducing liquid calories by as little as 100 calories a day (half a bottle of soda) led to significant weight loss by the end of the 18-month study period. This study also determined that reducing liquid calories has a larger impact on weight reduction than reducing the equivalent amount of solid food calories. Moreover, previous scientific observations have found that reducing liquid calories does not seem to make us hungrier (as is the case with cutting back on solid food calories). These collective findings ultimately tell me that dumping your liquid calories is the easiest and the most powerful means to weight loss.

Soda: Just Say No

I stand firmly on record as a wellness expert who strongly discourages the consumption of all sugar-fortified beverages, especially soda. In fact, of all the radical and adverse changes in the modern American diet, our record consumption of liquid sugars is arguably the most profound. Aside from smoking, consuming sugary beverages tops my list of unhealthy habits. As a form of unhealthy calories, soda is simply in a league of its own. Soda has ZERO nutritional value and has repeatedly and consistently been associated with great harm. Here are some key research findings:

- Women who increased soda consumption to one a day increased their risk of type 2 diabetes 83 percent compared to those consuming one or less monthly.
- For kids, each additional daily serving of soda increased the risk of obesity by 60 percent.
- A single daily serving of soda caused significant tooth enamel erosion. Four cups a day increased the risk by 252 percent.
- Adults who consumed two or more sodas per week were 87 percent more likely to develop pancreatic cancer (one of the most lethal cancers) than those who didn't drink soda.
- Those who drank the most soda consumed less milk, essential nutrients, fruit and fiber. They did, however, consume more carbohydrate calories.
- Those drinking two or more colas a day more than doubled their risk of chronic kidney disease.
- Those drinking one or more soft drinks a day were 44 percent more likely to develop metabolic syndrome than those who drank less than one a day.
- Women who consumed two or more sweetened beverages daily were 35 percent more likely to have a heart attack versus those who drank one or less a month.

Need I say more—just say no to soda!

(Continued on page 104)

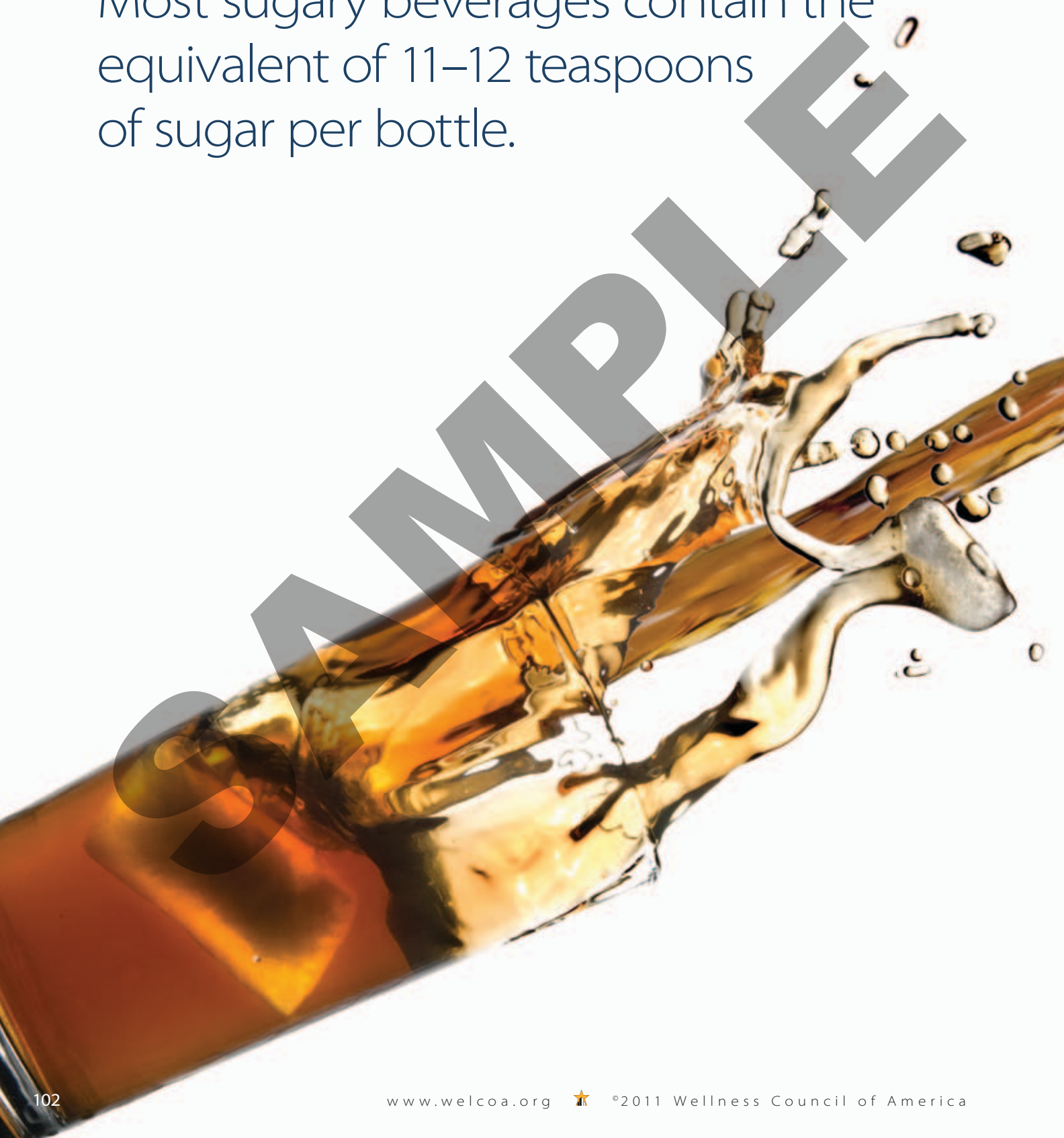
Soda: Bad To The Bone

All carbonated beverages, including diet brands, are acidic in nature. The acids from carbonated beverages enter your bloodstream and are buffered by calcium. However, if the calcium levels in the bloodstream are inadequate, your bones will supply it. Studies have shown that even modest levels of cola consumption are associated with lower bone mineral density scores. And our teeth fare even worse than our bones. The acids in soda damage tooth enamel. As little as a single cup serving of soda a day has been shown to cause significant, irreversible tooth enamel erosion.



FAST FACT:

Most sugary beverages contain the equivalent of 11–12 teaspoons of sugar per bottle.





Would you ever put 12 teaspoons
of sugar in your coffee or cereal?!

“Neither would I.
Always make water your beverage of choice.”



“If insulin is released with no real glucose coming in, blood sugar levels will drop, which can incite hunger.”

What About Diet Drinks?

Alas, I must tell you that diet sodas are an unacceptable alternative. I strongly discourage both regular and diet soda. I imagine that you may be wondering how this seemingly benign, zero calorie beverage could do any harm. Although I do think diet soda is clearly the lesser of two evils, emerging data has suggested that this trendy beverage may indeed come with some health risks.

The famed Framington Heart Study found that study participants who consumed one or more diet sodas a day experienced a 50 to 60 percent greater risk of developing metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is an epidemic condition in which a person has at least three cardiovascular risk factors occurring simultaneously. As you would expect, it dramatically boosts the risk of heart disease. In fact, about 60 percent of all heart attacks can be directly attributed to it. A second report found that cola lovers—including those who drank diet versions—could be harming their kidneys. In this evaluation, subjects who consumed two or more servings of diet cola daily were almost two and a half times more likely to develop kidney disease. The study’s authors speculate that a common preservative (phosphoric acid) is the likely culprit. High levels of phosphoric acid are a recognized irritant for the kidneys.

Believe it or not, these so-called “diet” drinks may actually result in weight gain, despite their zero calorie make-up. Animal studies have found that artificial sweeteners can interfere with the body’s natural ability to match caloric intake to energy expenditure. Additionally, the mere taste of something sweet in our mouths may trigger a blood insulin response. If insulin is released with no real glucose coming in, blood sugar levels will drop, which can incite hunger.

Anecdotally, I’ve had several people in my private wellness coaching practice lose weight by simply giving up their daily diet sodas. If you are hooked on diet sodas, work on weaning yourself from them; they are simply not healthy beverages. If you miss the caffeine kick, substitute soda with some freshly brewed unsweetened tea.



Keeping It Real

With the exception of those with diabetes, I do not recommend the use of artificial sweeteners. Although science supports their long-term safety, I am concerned that they may lead to weight gain. There are several biologically plausible mechanisms whereby this could take place. A provocative laboratory study recently provided some hard evidence to support my fears. Purdue University researchers fed one group of rats artificially sweetened yogurt and a second group sugar-sweetened yogurt. Rats getting the artificially sweetened yogurt ate more food and gained more weight than rats eating sugar-sweetened yogurt. As demonstrated in previous laboratory studies, artificial sweeteners can interfere with the body's natural ability to use sensory cues to gauge calorie consumption. Artificial sweeteners are exquisitely sweet substances—anywhere from 40 to 800 times sweeter than table sugar—yet they have no calories. When included regularly in the diet, the body may not expect much in terms of calories from sweets, and respond by ultimately eating more! At a minimum, I can assure you that artificial sweeteners exploit the human palate's highly developed taste for sweets. If you include them regularly, the bar for what tastes sweet is going to be set stratospherically high. In this situation, I have concerns that you will never be able to appreciate and be satisfied with the delicious and healthy sweetness of nature's dessert, namely fruit.

Assuming you are not diabetic, when you feel the need to sweeten a food or beverage (which shouldn't be very often or in large quantities), just use a little bit of the real thing. I put a teaspoon of real sugar or honey in my morning coffee and I'm still lean and healthy. In the context of a healthy diet and adequate levels of physical activity, a small amount of sugar is not harmful.

“...artificial sweeteners exploit the human palate's highly developed taste for sweets.”



Fruit Juices: Eat Your Fruit, Don't Drink It

Although 100 percent fruit juices can provide a concentrated source of vitamins and minerals, they also provide a concentrated source of sugar and calories. One cup of orange juice typically contains the sugar from three or more oranges, and as you now know, sugar in the form of liquid glucose and fructose that enters your bloodstream without hesitation is not a good thing. Additionally, some fruit juices contain more calories than soda!

It's always better for your health and physique to eat your fruit rather than drink it. The sugars in whole, fresh fruit come along with high amounts of difficult-to-digest and very good-for-you fiber. This means that those sugars will be gradually and gently released into the bloodstream. Additionally, the fiber in fruits provide potent antioxidant phytochemicals. Fruit juice is a phytochemical weakling compared to a piece of real fruit. So, eat the whole fruit and forgo fruit juice. This is especially important for those who are overweight or insulin resistant.

If you are lean and fit and just can't go without fruit juice, stick to four ounces or less a day and select 100 percent fruit juices that are cloudy and have a sediment at the bottom. In head-to-head comparisons of juices, pulpy, non-clarified juices deliver a more robust antioxidant punch than clear juices.



THE DRINKS YOU NEED TO GULP

Water: The Perfect Beverage

There is one, and only one, beverage that is perfectly suited to our biological needs: pure, clean, natural water. Water is the body's most vital essential nutrient. Illness and death will ensue from lack of water much more quickly than any other essential nutrient. Water best suits the liquid requirements of the human body—it has zero calories and is free of unhealthy additives.

On average, water makes up 65 percent of the body and it performs a variety of vital functions. It helps regulate body temperature, cushions internal organs, lubricates joints, keeps our mucous membranes moist, and is the medium in which virtually every chemical and metabolic reaction in the body occurs. The amount of water you need to drink is based on how many calories you burn daily. The US Recommended Daily Allowance for water is one milliliter per calorie burned. If you expend 2,000 calories a day, you require 2,000 milliliters, or two liters of water a day. This figure must be increased for physical activity, hot or humid environments, high altitudes, illness, pregnancy and nursing. The average woman needs 2.7 liters daily and the average man requires 3.7 liters.

Always make water your beverage of choice. Drink water with your meals and always try to keep some within arm's reach to take the edge off your thirst. For those who currently drink sugary beverages and need to lose weight, I want to remind you that substituting water is the most powerful and effective change you can make to improve your chances of weight loss success. I have seen countless patients successfully lose weight just by substituting water for sodas and other sugar-fortified beverages. So ditch the soda and make the switch!

Is Bottled Water Better?

It is an urban myth that bottled water is healthier than tap water. Municipal water supplies are more rigorously tested and monitored than bottled waters, and tap water costs a fraction of a cent (which is at least 200 times cheaper than bottled water). Additionally, many bottled waters come straight from the tap anyway. If you have any concerns about the safety or quality of your tap water, consider purchasing a home water purification system.

Moreover, please don't waste your money on the dizzying array of "fortified" waters now commonly available on grocery store shelves. There is no evidence that taking in vitamins, minerals or other "healthy" additives in this manner has any health benefits. To the contrary, given the growing number of fortified foods and popular use of supplements, I have concerns that some people may be consuming too much of them. With vitamins and minerals, more is not necessarily better, and can even be dangerous. Lastly, many of these designer waters are loaded with sugar, and you know by now that sugary beverages are unhealthy and should be avoided. Don't be duped and do not waste your money on these products.

(Continued on page 110)

FAST FACT:

Americans now drink an enormous amount of liquid sugar calories that averages to 300 calories a day!



If Americans stopped drinking sugary beverages, it would likely halt the obesity epidemic dead in its tracks.



“Dumping your liquid calories likely offers the single greatest return on your health.

Always make water your beverage of choice.”



“All forms of freshly brewed tea are great for you—green, black, white and oolong.”



Vegetable Juice: An Exception To The Juice Rule

While studies consistently show that drinking calories provides less appetite suppression than eating them, vegetable juice may be the exception. Including vegetable juice in your diet is a good idea for a variety of reasons. It's brimming with vitamins A and C and potassium as well as numerous other health-boosting nutrients and antioxidants. A single, four-ounce glass of vegetable juice counts as a full serving of vegetables. Relative to most other beverages, 100 percent vegetable juice is low in calories and will not spike your blood glucose and fructose levels. In fact, drinking a glass of vegetable juice prior to a meal appears to help us eat less. Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine had 81 study participants drink zero, one, or two eight-ounce cups of low sodium vegetable juice daily for 12 weeks. Those who drank the vegetable juice lost an average of four pounds during the 12 weeks, while those who didn't lost just one pound. Scientists speculate that the fiber or perhaps the concentrated supply of nutrients found in vegetable juice may take the edge off hunger.

Tea: Brewing With Benefits

Freshly brewed tea can decrease your cardiovascular risk, boost your immunity, slow your cognitive decline, kick up your metabolism, help mitigate stress and likely reduce your cancer risk—all for zero calories! Based on the science and my own personal experience, I am wildly enthusiastic about regularly drinking freshly brewed, unsweetened tea. This superstar elixir of good health is exploding with potent antioxidants called catechins. These special chemicals protect our bodies from the ravages of free radicals even more effectively than the antioxidants in fruits and veggies. If you are not currently taking advantage of freshly brewed tea, you should start today. I sip on freshly brewed, unsweetened tea throughout my work day and find it the easiest, quickest and most relaxing way to continuously infuse my body and brain with those life-preserving antioxidants.

All forms of freshly brewed tea are great for you—green, black, white and oolong. They are all derived from the same leaf, the camellia sinensis leaf (home to those remarkable antioxidant catechins). Drink the varieties you enjoy—cold or hot, bagged or loose-leaf—just brew it yourself to fully exploit its goodness. The processing required for powdered, bottled or decaffeinated teas destroys many of its antioxidants. Further, the bottled and powdered versions usually have added sugars or artificial sweeteners, which is another drawback.

For best results, steep your tea of choice for at least three minutes and squeeze the bag at the end of steeping to extract as many remaining catechins as possible. Avoid added milk or cream, as studies have shown they bind tea's beneficial compounds, rendering them unavailable to work their antioxidant magic for the body. Do add a twist of lemon or lime though. A recent report found that the vitamin C in citrus enhances the absorption of catechins up to three-fold!

Alcohol: Benefits In Moderation

Given the popularity of this particular beverage, I think it's important to provide you with the latest scientific facts on alcohol and health. Including alcohol in moderation, defined as one drink or less a day for women and two drinks or less a day for men, lowers the risk of heart disease and ischemic strokes by about 30 percent. Over 100 studies have supported these findings. A growing number of studies have shown that a little bit of alcohol on a daily basis can improve insulin sensitivity, which may lower the risk of type 2 diabetes and improve weight control. Including alcohol in moderation has also been linked to protection from dementia and greater overall longevity. However, there is a very fine line when it comes to alcohol use and reaping potential health benefits. As soon as you cross over from moderate to higher levels, even slightly higher levels, disease risk quickly mounts. We have conclusive evidence that drinking excess alcohol increases the risk of many cancers, damages the brain, liver and heart, increases blood pressure, incites bleeding strokes and leads to addiction and accidents.

As a female with a family history of breast cancer, I want to be certain that women know that alcohol is the single most powerful nutritional risk factor for breast cancer. Even going from one drink a day to two has been shown in several studies to boost breast cancer risk by 25 to 30 percent. Binge drinking is especially risky for breast health. If you are concerned about breast cancer, alcohol should be avoided.

The decision to drink in moderation or not to drink should be individualized and should consider your personal and family medical history. If you enjoy alcohol and do not have a medical condition in which alcohol has been prohibited, including a drink a day can be harmonious with healthy living.

Red wine has special features that deserve mention. Because it is fermented with the grapes and their skins, red wine is exceptionally high in powerful antioxidants called polyphenols. A growing number of studies suggest that red wine may have benefits over and above other forms of alcohol—likely because of its superior antioxidant status. Red wines can vary dramatically in their levels of beneficial antioxidants. According to an analysis published in *Nature*, red wines from Sardinia and South Western France have up to five to ten times more polyphenols than wines produced elsewhere. A small glass of red wine with dinner would be the healthiest way to include alcohol.



Hold The Red Wine—That Is... In Your Mouth

Resveratrol, a super-strong antioxidant in red wine, has become somewhat of a wonder compound in the laboratory. Studies have linked it with a host of remarkable benefits from cancer prevention to slowing the aging process. Unfortunately, resveratrol is very poorly absorbed once it enters the gastrointestinal tract. New research, however, has shown that it can be readily absorbed through the mucous membranes lining our mouths. One study reported blood levels of resveratrol up to 100 times greater if the red wine was slowly sipped and allowed to linger in the mouth versus being gulped down. So for best results, sip and savor!

Coffee: Wake Up To This Healthy Drink

Coffee is not only a remarkably safe beverage, mounting science reveals that drinking coffee may also offer health benefits. There are over 1,000 bioactive compounds in coffee, including many potent antioxidants. There is ample evidence that drinking coffee regularly is linked to a decreased risk of Parkinson's disease, diabetes, gallstones, stroke, Alzheimer's and suicide. The active ingredient in coffee, namely caffeine, improves mental performance, lifts mood and enhances endurance. The stimulating properties of caffeine can have drawbacks though, interfering with sleep and eliciting nervousness or a jittery feeling, so listen to your body and drink accordingly. Caffeine may increase the risk of miscarriage, so it's best for pregnant women to avoid coffee completely. If you enjoy your java like I do, include it as desired, but stay away from the empty calories of added sugar and cream, especially if you drink lots of it.

Use the following *Drink The Right Beverages Plan Of Action* to guide you in choosing the best beverages for your health and wellness.

PLAN OF ACTION

Drink the **right** beverages.

1. DRINK PURE, CLEAN WATER AS YOUR BEVERAGE OF CHOICE.

2. **AVOID ALL SUGARY BEVERAGES: SODA (INCLUDING DIET), FRUIT DRINKS, CHOCOLATE MILK, SUGAR-SWEETENED TEA, SPORTS DRINKS*, DESSERT COFFEE BEVERAGES AND ANY OTHER SUGAR-FORTIFIED BEVERAGES. SUGARY BEVERAGES HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO PROMOTE WEIGHT GAIN (WHICH PROMOTES MOST DISEASES), OBESITY, TYPE 2 DIABETES, METABOLIC SYNDROME AND TOOTH DECAY.**

3. IN ADDITION TO WATER, PERMISSIBLE BEVERAGES INCLUDE:

- 100 percent vegetable or tomato juice. Vegetable/tomato juice prior to a meal may be especially helpful for those who need to lose weight. Low sodium varieties are best.
- If you are lean and active, 100 percent fruit juice can be included in moderation. Limit to four ounces a day. Strictly avoid if overweight, diabetic or insulin resistant.
- Organic, plain soy milk
- One percent or skim organic milk
- Unsweetened, freshly brewed tea (green, black, white or oolong). Strive for two or more cups daily. Add a twist of citrus to kick up the flavor and to enhance absorption of its antioxidants. Herbal teas are fine too.
- Coffee as tolerated. Unsweetened, black or with skim milk is best. (Avoid if pregnant)
- For those who enjoy alcohol and have no personal medical history to preclude its safe use, alcohol can be included in moderation (if in doubt, discuss with your healthcare provider). One drink or less a day for women and two drinks or less a day for men. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, one-and-a-half ounces of hard liquor, or five ounces of wine. Red wine is best. Make any beer low carb.

(*Sports beverages are acceptable in the context of strenuous physical activity lasting more than one hour.)