

Common Sugary Drink Myths Explained

Myth: Fruit drinks are healthy (or at least healthier than soda).

Fruit drinks have little or no actual fruit juice in them. Many fruit drinks are mostly added sugar and water and contain nearly as many calories as soda. Ounce for ounce, many fruit drinks actually contain more sugar than soda. While many fruit drinks contain some vitamins, such as vitamin C, the amount of sugar in them keeps fruit drinks from being considered a “healthy” beverage.

Myth: Children need fruit drinks to get enough vitamin C.

Children can get vitamin C from a variety of whole food sources such as cantaloupe, oranges, kiwi, broccoli, and red and green bell peppers. Children should eat foods high in vitamin C almost every day. Juice and fruit drinks can be easily fortified and these drinks are often loaded with sugar, making it an unhealthy way to get vitamin C.

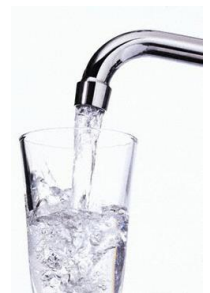


Myth: Some caffeine is ok for children and teens.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of 18 avoid caffeine-containing beverages. Regular soda has 32 milligrams of caffeine and energy drinks are especially worrisome as they contain much more. Some energy drinks do not even list their caffeine content. Caffeine has been linked to a number of harmful effects in children.

Myth: Children need sports drinks after physical activity.

According to The American Academy of Pediatrics, in most cases, there is no need for children to drink sports drinks. Water provides enough hydration and is the best choice, even for active children. Sports drinks have a limited function for child athletes in need of rapid nutrient replenishment during prolonged, vigorous physical activity. There is no reason for kids to drink sports drinks unless a health professional specifically recommends that they do so.



Myth: Drinks labeled “natural” are healthy.

The Food and Drug Administration has not defined the term “natural”, but allows its use if a food does not contain added color, artificial flavors, or

synthetic substances. This means that many natural ingredients originated from a recognizable food but many have undergone chemical and physical processes to drastically change the ingredient. Many drinks containing the word “natural” contain ingredients manufactured in a lab and may contain a considerable amount of empty calories, making it an unhealthy choice.

Myth: Diet soda is healthy

In addition to containing caffeine, zero-calorie sweeteners, diet soda is concerning because it is also very acidic. The acid in soda erodes tooth enamel, which leads to tooth decay and cavities. Additionally, the Institute of Medicine states that artificially sweetened drinks are not recommended for children, as they displace healthier beverages.

