

Sugar

A. What are sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks are drinks (carbonated or not) that contain added sugars.

- Pop or soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Hot chocolate
- Store-bought smoothies
- Slushes
- Fruity drinks (e.g., “punches”, “cocktails” or “-ades”)
- Sports drinks
- Flavoured or vitamin-enhanced waters

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to drinks or foods during processing (e.g. sugars added to pop by the manufacturer) or preparation (e.g. sugars added to a cappuccino after it was bought at the coffee shop). Sugary drinks often have little to no nutritional value. These drinks “bump out” the nutritious drinks and foods our bodies need to be healthy. For example, children and adolescents who drink pop regularly are more likely to have lower intakes of calcium and other nutrients.

Naturally occurring sugars are no different from added sugars in terms of their effects on the body. However, because drinks with naturally occurring sugars often contain important nutrients, they can be consumed in moderation as part of healthy eating. Some drinks with naturally occurring sugar are 100% fruit juice (contains fructose), and plain milk (contains lactose).

Hidden sugars are other names for added sugars that might not sound or look like sugar. These include: sucrose, dextrose, dextrin, maltose, galactose, liquid glucose-fructose, invert sugar, raw cane sugar, brown sugar, corn sweetener, high-fructose corn syrup, rice syrup, concentrates of fruit puree or fruit juice, honey, malt syrup, and molasses.

What about **artificial sweeteners**?

In keeping with the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*, drinks sweetened with artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium and sucralose are not allowed in elementary and middle schools (but allowed in secondary schools as *Sell Sometimes* items). Just like sugary drinks, artificially sweetened drinks get children used to sweet-tasting, non-nutritious items. They provide none of the nutrients that a child’s growing body needs to be healthy and strong, and can bump healthy foods and drinks out of the child’s diet. These drinks may also contain artificial sweeteners in amounts that exceed the acceptable daily intake (ADI) for children.

References

HealthyFamilies BC, *Facts About Sugary Drinks*, August 2013

BC Ministry of Education and BC Ministry of Health, *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*, 2013

HealthyFamilies BC, *Your Guide to Sugar Part 1 and Part 2*, January 2015