



POINTS TO PONDER

Drink to your health: It's not just what you eat

For teachers. These interactive discussion questions are designed to stimulate discussion with students in the classroom. Some may be better suited for older students.



1. Have students discuss their favorite drink choices.

- What types of drinks do they typically have?
- How many of the choices are sweetened beverages or drinks?
- How many students regularly drink water?

2. Ask students what they think are wise choices for drinks.

- Water
- 100 percent juice
- Low-fat or fat-free milk

3. Talk to students about energy drinks. Ask how many drink them and why.

- Explain that the energy in these drinks comes from stimulants and sugar.
- Explain the negative side effects of energy drinks.
 - Nervousness
 - Irritability or being grouchy
 - Increased heart rate
 - Increased blood pressure
 - Difficulty sleeping

4. Talk to students about the amounts of sugar in soft drinks.

Most regular soft drinks contain about 1 teaspoon of sugar per ounce. For example, students who drink a 12-ounce can of soda consumed 12 teaspoons of sugar.*

- Ask students if they are surprised by this.
- Would they ever eat this much sugar at one time?

**For an added visual, show them a mea-*

suring teaspoon or use sugar packets or sugar cubes to show them how much sugar they are getting. Each of these is equal to about 1 teaspoon of sugar.

5. Ask students what problems drinking this amount of sugar might cause.

- Increase chances of weight gain.
- Increase chances of tooth decay.

6. Ask students what they can do to make healthier beverage choices.

- Have sugar-sweetened drinks less often or have smaller sizes.
- Drink water or low-fat milk with meals.
- Add flavor to water with lemon, lime or a splash of 100 percent fruit juice.
- Drink 100 percent fruit juice (in moderation).
- Read beverage labels to learn how healthy a drink is.

FUN WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT BEVERAGES IN YOUR SCHOOL:

1. Track the beverages. Have students track their beverage choices for a week (individually or by classroom). Have them compare their experiences at the end of the week.

- How many were sugar-sweetened drinks?
- How many were healthier choices?

2. Classroom challenge. Track beverages as a classroom activity. Have each class track their beverage choices for a week (can be done as a graphing activity). Have a contest to see which classroom makes healthier beverage choices.

3. What's in your drink? Have students bring in labels from different beverages they drink. Compare labels by looking at calories, serving sizes, nutrients, ingredients, etc. Discuss which beverages might be better or healthier choices.