

Drink Up!

You know what you should eat, but what should you drink?

Most of the people I see want to know about what they should eat to get healthy, what foods will help them stay slim, what they can have to maintain energy. But very few actually realize that it's not just what we eat that affects our health, but also what we drink!

So, what are your drink options? And what should you drink to maximize your health? Here is a look at some of the most common drinks, and their health effects:

Coffee/Tea

Coffee and tea have become some of the most common drinks today, especially with the 'coffee culture' taking over the world. The great thing about these drinks is that they give you a lot of energy; but they also give you a sharp slump and leave you wanting more. The main component of coffee and tea, caffeine, is a stimulant which gets the heart beating faster (therefore pressure on the cardiovascular system). Caffeine also excretes important minerals from the body such as calcium, magnesium, and zinc. So, instead of drinking 6 cups of coffee or tea every day, stick to one and make it count. And experiment with delicious herbal alternatives which are now available at almost all cafés and supermarkets. Try peppermint, chamomile, fennel, or fruits teas such as pear, guava, and raspberry teas.

Colas

Fizzy drinks are an absolute nightmare to health and it still doesn't make sense to me why people drink them. They resemble nothing from nature, and they look and taste like a lab experiment gone wrong! They are full of chemicals, caffeine, sugar (or artificial sweeteners), and unpronounceable additives. And they're made with tap water!

If you are used to having something fizzy with your meal, wean yourself off by replacing cokes with sparkling water.

Juice

Drinking juice is a great way to get vitamins. It is easily available, easy to make, and tastes great! The trap that most people fall into, however, is drinking too much juice. We all know that juice is good for you, but what most people don't know is that fruit juice contains a lot of sugar (fruit sugar). If you think of how many oranges it takes to make a small glass of orange juice, you'll be able to see the picture. Concentrated fruit sugar, which you get from juice, can sometimes have the same effects as regular sugar and can upset blood sugar balance, hormones, and mood! So what can you do? Have the occasional fresh fruit juice, and always dilute it with water. If you're buying ready-made juice, make sure there is no added sugar or additives.

Milk

Although milk seems to be the preferred drink for kids, many adults drink it too in efforts to stay healthy. What you should remember, is that milk is meant for the baby calf, not for humans. Most children under the age of 2 can tolerate milk well but adults don't need it. Not only does milk contain a lot of fat that can make you gain weight, it also contains lots of hormones and medicines that can cause ill health. Furthermore, milk is naturally mucus-forming, which means that it will add to congestion and blocked nose.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol has a lot more side-effects than people think. Not only is alcohol a toxin that can put pressure on the body's detoxifying organs such as the liver, but it is also very high in calories adding to weight. Alcoholic drinks are also very high in sugar and can contribute to blood sugar imbalance. Worse yet, alcohol can disturb hormonal balance, worsening female hormonal problems and giving men female-like hormone problems such as more prominent breasts.

Water

Water is often the forgotten drink that everybody takes for granted. We all know we should be drinking water, but very few of us do. The benefits of water would require a whole other article, but it would suffice to say that it is the secret to life. Water purifies the blood, clears the brain, heals the skin, and aids digestion. If you drink water on an empty stomach first thing in the morning, you help flush out all the toxins and hormones that have been cleared while you were sleeping. Water also helps shed unwanted pounds and increases energy. Caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, and colas are dehydrating and will increase the body's need for water.

Tip

5 Easy ways to get more water into your life:

- Put a small bottle of water next to your bed and make sure to drink it before you go to work.
- Put 2 more small bottles on your desk at work and make sure you drink them before you leave work in the afternoon
- Make water more interesting by adding slices of lemon or funky straws
- Get more water into your daily routine by adding it to herbal teas and juices (yes, it counts)
- Have more water-based soups

How do you know you're having enough water? Look at the colour of your urine. If you are well-hydrated, your urine should be a very faint yellow. The darker it is, the more likely you are dehydrated, so drink up!

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