

## Healthy Beverage Choices

Generally, the best drink for your body is water. Water provides the body with everything it needs to quench your thirst and rehydrate your system. Let's also explore some other healthy options.

Healthy alternatives to water include tea and coffee. These are inexpensive beverages that, when plain, are calorie-free and loaded with antioxidants that may be good for health. These drinks are good choices because they are a natural way to get caffeine and could have potential health benefits in protecting against some diseases. However, we need to be careful with these (especially coffee) to avoid adding too much cream or flavoring because it can easily turn healthy drinks into unhealthy desserts. Many 'coffee treats' can be upwards of 500 calories of sugar and cream.



One simple healthy option might be to enhance your water. You can change up the water you drink by getting sparkling water or by adding some flavor. Sparkling water can be purchased at the store for relatively inexpensive prices and is a good substitute when you're craving something bubbly. You can also purchase water flavorings that are either liquid drops or powder packets - they tend to be low in calories and add taste to otherwise simple water. Another great option is to add fruit to your water, such as strawberries, watermelon and cantaloupe that can add taste to your water in a reasonably healthy way!

Sometimes, healthy beverages include choosing options that are better for you in replacement of those that aren't as healthy. Low-fat or skim milk are better alternatives if you're looking for less calories; however, whole milk has more nutrients and can be used in moderation.

Similar to powders or drops mentioned above, we might think that diet sodas or other diet drinks might be a good alternative. However, these alternatives can actually have negative effects on our bodies. Diet drinks are loaded with artificial sweeteners and some studies say they might actually lead to weight gain or body changes. These beverages should be consumed occasionally as a treat instead of a daily drink and are more beneficial when transitioning from unhealthy sodas to better options.

Overall, we should try and avoid beverages that are completely unhealthy. Unhealthy beverages include soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks and artificially flavored drinks that can contain chemicals and/or too much sugar. These beverages don't help hydrate the body or support its function and end up being a waste of our daily calories. We should try and drink as much water as we can and look into these other options when we're looking for something different as a treat!

