

Rethink your drink

AVOID LIQUIDS THAT FILL YOU UP AND OUT

That grande (16 oz.) peppermint chocolate mocha you grabbed before work might have perked you up, but it added 400 calories to your diet. With another 250 calories from the 20 oz. cola you drank with lunch, and the 300 calories from the two 12 oz. beers that helped you unwind after work, it's no wonder you're having trouble maintaining or losing weight. Your drinks alone account for about 1,000 calories of what should be a 1,500 (women) or 2,000 (men) calorie daily diet.

Sweet tea guzzlers, don't smirk. One 32 oz. drink from McDonald's contains 280 calories. And a Long Island iced tea packs a whopping 532 calories in one 16 oz. bottle.

DO DIET DRINKS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Ideally, diet soft drinks help keep calories down, but research shows that people who drink diet sodas tend to be heavier than those who pass on carbonated drinks altogether. Why? Diet drinkers give themselves permission to eat more food.

DID YOU KNOW?

Having two 12-ounce regular sodas a day could add 30 pounds of weight in a year. Having water instead of these sodas can help you shed 30 pounds a year!

HEALTHY DRINKING TIPS

- Drink coffee black with a small amount of nonfat milk or unsweetened soy milk.
- Give your water some flavor with a squeeze of lemon, lime, or orange. Or, add a fresh strawberry or slice of cucumber or melon. Herbs such as ginger, cinnamon, or mint can also add flavor.
- Opt for caffeine-free herbal teas.
- Get the added benefit of antioxidants with fresh or low-sodium canned vegetable juices.
- Make homemade smoothies using fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, protein powder, and soy or rice milk.
- Mix one part fruit juice to three parts water or sparkling water.
- Drink wine in moderation. It has about 125 calories per 4-5 ounces.
- If beer is your alcohol of choice, try "lite" beer, but check out the calories per serving. Some light beers have almost as many calories as regular beer. Limit beer to one or two per day.
- Nix the cocktails with high-calorie mixers, such as soda, juice, and cream.
- Save the sports drinks for high intensity workouts as they have about 100 calories per 8 oz. serving. Lower the calories by mixing 4 oz. of water with 4 oz. of the sports drink.

