

## Healthy Hydration in the Hot Summer

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No doubt about it- summer in Florida means heat and humidity, and this time of year nothing sounds better than an ice cold refreshing beverage to quench your thirst. Although drinking plenty of fluids is important year-round, the summer months usually have us yearning for more, which is a good thing because most of us probably need it. But, while many beverage choices can adequately hydrate, they can also come full of empty calories. So consider your waistline and choose wisely if you want to drink more than just water.

Regularly consuming caloric drinks such as regular sodas, “energy” drinks, sweetened juice drinks, and sweet coffee drinks can really add up. For example, a Starbucks® regular 16 ounce Mocha Frappuccino® contains 380 calories and 15 grams of fat. Drinking just one a day for a month could have you gaining a little over three pounds. Be suspicious of any new specialty drink, such as “water” containing extra vitamins and/or herbs as they can often come with added calories. And a quick note about sports drinks; they are really only necessary if you are strenuously exercising for more than an hour. Most of us don’t fall into that category and the calories they contain can add up over time for the light to moderate exerciser.

Here are some much better choices when it comes to what you regularly choose to drink:

- Water is always a good choice. Its calorie free, caffeine free, and sodium free. Try to choose water most often.
- Green, black or white tea contains less caffeine than coffee and also provides health benefits as it is a rich source of antioxidants. In warm weather brew it and serve it over ice. Use the heat and sun to brew the tea bags in a large glass pitcher. No microwave or stove top needed.
- Herbal teas usually contain no caffeine, sugar or sodium and make a flavorful alternative to water. They can also be brewed using the heat and sun outside and then served over ice. You can find a variety of flavors including raspberry, mango, black cherry and mint.
- If you are looking for a little fizz, try sparkling water which doesn’t contain artificial sweeteners, sugar, or caffeine.
- Other good choices are milk, milk alternatives, and 100% juices. These beverages do contain calories and should not be the only fluids consumed throughout the day.
- While diet drinks are calorie free, recent studies suggest they may not promote weight loss and may even cause weight gain. A recent study from Boston University and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute found that drinking just one regular or diet soda a day increased the risk of excess belly fat, high blood sugar, and high blood pressure by 48%. And, a study at the University of Texas Health Science Center found a 41% increase of being overweight for every can of diet soda consumed. 2 cans a day increased the risk to 60%.

References:

The Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness

[http://www.beverageinstitute.org/hydration/hydration\\_features.shtml#2](http://www.beverageinstitute.org/hydration/hydration_features.shtml#2)

Oracle ThinkQuest Education Foundation

<http://www.thinkquest.org/apr04dec04/water.shtml>

The Environmental Protection Agency

[http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/edresources/water\\_5.html](http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/edresources/water_5.html)

MadSci Network

<http://www.madsci.org/posts/archives/may2000/958588306.An.r.html>

Clemson Home and Garden Information Center

<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/hgic4151.htm>

[www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com)