

GULP FAQ's

GENERAL

What is Give Up Loving Pop or GULP?

Give Up Loving Pop is a campaign from Food Active that aims to help people cut back on sugary drinks by raising awareness of the health harms of over-consumption and by informing people of the benefits of drinking alternatives such as water and milk not only for health but also in terms of educational attainment and sporting performance.

Why focus on sugary drinks? Confectionary has just as much sugar in it?

Research consistently demonstrates that sugary drinks are the biggest source of sugar in children and young people's diets. By helping them to cut back we can have a significant impact on their overall sugar intake. Additionally, sugary drinks contain little more than sugar, chemicals and water, so they do not fill you up. You are therefore unlikely to register the 'empty' calories and still consume as much food at the next meal.

How much sugar should I have per day?

The government's scientific advisory committee on nutrition (SACN) recommends that our daily intake should be less than 5% of our total energy intake. This means:

- Children aged 4 to 6 should have no more than 19g (5 sugar cubes) per day
- Children aged 7 to 10 should have no more than 24g (6 sugar cubes) per day
- Children aged 11 years and upwards, as well as adults, should have no more than 30g (7 sugar cubes) per day.

I don't like water, what can I drink instead?

Try adding some chopped fruit to a bottle of chilled water (lemon, cucumber, orange) as it will change the taste slightly. Or mix water with a small amount of fresh fruit juice. Try carbonated water if you miss the 'fizz'. Keep trying water, it doesn't take long to get used to a new food or drink.

What about milk?

Although milk does contain a small amount of sugar (lactose), this is not included in the guideline. The sugars found naturally in milk and whole fruit are fine, it is the 'added' or 'free' sugars we should be looking out for. Milk also contains lots of calcium which is important for both your teeth and bones. Choose semi-skimmed (green top) or skimmed (red top) varieties as these contain less fat.

I'm not overweight so why should I care about the amount of sugar in drinks?

Whilst sugary drinks do contain unnecessary calories, it is also linked with dental decay, heart disease and type 2 diabetes regardless of weight. There are increasing cases on slim people suffering from metabolic disorders due to poor diet, and in particular high consumption of added sugars.

I really like the taste of Cola. Do I really need to stop drinking it?

Our campaign is called Give Up **Loving** Pop. We want to help you reduce the amount of sugar you consume by cutting back on high sugar drinks. That means you can enjoy Cola from time to time, but try to reduce the amount you have – minimising the amount you drink will be beneficial to your health.

Why do sugary drinks taste so nice?

When a person consumes sugar, just like any food, it activates the tongue's taste receptors. This sends a signal to the brain, lighting up reward pathways and causing a surge of feel-good hormones to be released. You can get the same 'buzz' from physical activity.

My family member/friend drinks lots of sugary drinks, how do I get them to stop?

Share with them what you have learned today and tell them you are worried about their health. Try to come up with tasty alternatives they can try.

How many servings of Coca-Cola are consumed each day?

1,800,000,000 or 1.8 billion servings of Coca-Cola are consumed each day around the world. And that's just one type of high sugar drink!

Does pure orange juice contain lots of sugar?

Yes. Despite being one of your 5-a-day, pure orange juice does contain lots of sugar. Whilst it comes from the whole fruit, the pulp has been broken down so the sugars are now 'free'. This changes the way the body processes the sugar. It is recommended that you only have one 150ml glass of pure fruit juice a day and it is best to have it with a meal.

Are smoothies bad for you?

Similar to pure fruit juices, smoothies contain lots of important vitamins and minerals. But the amount of fruit that goes into them, means there is also a lot of sugar. Whilst it comes from the whole fruit, the pulp has been broken down so the sugars are now 'free'. This changes the way the body processes the sugar. Limit yourself to one small glass (150ml) and try to drink them with a meal to help prevent tooth decay.

What about fruit?

The sugar in whole fruit is bound within the cell structure, so when eaten it is harder for the body to break it down meaning it is released much more slowly in to the body. Whole fruit is a great source of nutrients. When the cell structure is broken down by juicing or blending the sugar is released from the cell structure and is essentially now a 'free' sugar. It is therefore processed much more quickly by the body. The slower the absorption of the sugar from food and drink, the better.

What's the difference between a sports drink and an energy drink?

Both sports and energy drinks contain high levels of sugar, similar to or more than a can of Coca-Cola, but energy drinks also contain caffeine which is an addictive stimulant.

How do you distinguish between a sports drink and an energy drink?

Sports drinks are only found in bottles (usually with a sports cap). Energy drinks are typically found in cans.

Is bottled water a healthier choice than tap water?

There is very little difference between bottled water and tap water. In fact, up to 25% of bottled water is exactly the same as tap water. If you can choose tap water you will be also helping to improve the environment.

My bottle of water has a strawberry on the front. Does this make it healthy?

If you can see fruit on the front of a bottle of water, this is usually a sign that it contains sugar. Similar to concentrated fruit juice, the sugars found in strawberries and other types of fruit is added to the water, giving it a sweet, fruity taste and a lot of sugar. Check the label as some of these drinks may be artificially sweetened.

I hear milk is really good for you. Does that mean milkshakes are too?

Unlike semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, milkshakes often contain more sugar than a typical can of Cola. Again, similar to fruit juices, concentrated sugars and flavourings are added to the milk to give it a distinct sweet taste. This goes for ready-made milkshakes such as Friji or Yopp and milkshake mixes such as Crusha syrups or Nesquik powders!

I don't have time to have a proper breakfast. Is it okay to have a breakfast drink?

Breakfast drinks are packed full of sugar, so try to avoid them. A sugary drink is no way to substitute the most important meal of the day! If you are in a rush, try a banana.

Can I have sugar in my tea and coffee? Just a small spoon?

Sorry. Sugar in tea and coffee isn't advised. If you prefer a sweeter cup, try using a sweetener instead.

BEVERAGE TERMS

What is concentrated fruit juice?

This means that once the fruit that forms the basis of the drink has been squeezed, all of the water is removed. This 'concentrated' juice is then usually shipped to another facility or location, possibly in another country, where the water is added back in. This process usually removes a lot of the nutrients and therefore manufacturers often put other things in such as added sugars.

Does 'no added sugar' mean it contains no sugar?

Just because a food contains 'no added sugar' it does not necessarily mean it has a low sugar content. The food may contain ingredients that have a naturally high sugar content (such as fruit).

What does it mean if a drink has 'no artificial sweeteners'?

This means that a drink has no man-made sweeteners such as aspartame or saccharin in it. However, the drink may still contain sugar and / or natural sweeteners.

What is the difference between sugars found in fruit and 'added sugars'?

The important difference is the way in which the body processes the sugars. In fruit the sugars are contained within the cell structure along with a lot of fibre, this means the body takes much longer to break the sugars down than if the sugar was in its free form. The slower digestion process means less of an insulin response which is great for the body. 'Added sugar' such as the sugars added to drinks is extra sugar put into the product during processing, these are processed much more quickly by the body and is why they can cause problems. The slower the absorption of the sugar by the body the better. .

DIET DRINKS

Should I switch to diet drinks?

Diet drinks contain little or no sugar and are therefore a better option than full sugar drinks. However due to the acid content of these drinks they can cause dental erosion. Diet drinks are useful as a step-change approach, however we would not recommend long term consumption

Do sweeteners such as aspartame cause cancer?

Scientific research indicates that artificial sweeteners consumed at current levels are safe and do not cause cancer.

Are Pepsi Max and Coca-Cola Zero considered 'diet' drinks?

Yes. The vast majority of drinks with words like 'Diet', 'Zero' and 'Lite' have either reduced sugar or not sugar in them at all. Somewhat confusingly, Pepsi Max, is also a diet drink and contains no sugar.

SPORTS DRINKS

I am trying to lose weight. Will sports drinks help?

The way they are advertised, you'd be forgiven for thinking there is some kind of magical elixir in them. But sports drinks contain a lot of sugar which enters the bloodstream quickly. Your body will then use this sugar to create energy instead of 'burning' fat. So sports drinks can actually hinder weight loss.

If sports drinks contain lots of sugar, just like other fizzy drinks, won't they rot my teeth?

Just like other high sugar drinks, drinking sports drinks regularly increases the chance of dental decay. In fact, premier league footballers have poor dental health from drinking sports drinks so often!

I do a lot of sport and need sports drinks to keep me going

Unless you are an elite athlete there is no need to consume sports drinks. The best way to hydrate is with water or low fat milk.

Local football teams encourage our young children to drink sports drinks. What should we do?

Reminding managers and coaches that sports drinks only came out about 20 years ago and footballers in the 70s and 80s didn't have them. If we didn't need them then, do we need them now? Comparing the sugar content in Lucozade Sport to Coca-Cola should also help to realise that sports drinks can be harmful. Explain that it is better to have a properly planned meal 90 minutes to 2 hours before a game than relying on liquid sugar.

ENERGY DRINKS

Is caffeine in Energy Drinks a problem?

Caffeine is a powerful and addictive stimulant which blocks a molecule in the brain called adenosine from telling us how tired we are, leading to increased alertness and wakefulness. However, while adenosine is being blocked it continues to build up, so when the effects of caffeine wears off we suddenly become very tired, lethargic and irritable. Research suggests that caffeine found in regular sugary drinks increases consumption.

What is Taurine?

Contrary to popular belief Taurine is not bull semen. It is an organic compound found in all animals and is essential for cardiovascular function, development and function of skeletal muscle, the retina and the central nervous system. Energy drinks have vast quantities of Taurine in them – but our bodies can manufacture it themselves.



SPONSORSHIP, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Why should we be concerned with marketing to children?

As children and young people are at an earlier stage in their cognitive development, they are more vulnerable to the influence of marketing. In addition, the products people consume at a young age establish their taste preferences which are linked to the development of brand loyalty which can last a lifetime.

Why do sugary drink companies use athletes and sport to market their products?

By associating their products with particular sports and professional athletes, sugary drinks companies can create an association between their product and sporting success, making their products aspirational.

I have seen a lot of sugary drinks adverts on Facebook, is this a problem?

Our media has fragmented over the last couple of decades and whereas once adverts were limited to television, print and radio, you can now find adverts on social media, on websites that track cookies and even mobile games. As restrictions to broadcast advertising become stricter, companies will look to other platforms of advertising to promote their products, including social media.

Why does my drink have lots of exotic ingredients in it?

There is a huge range of drinks available on the market including energy drinks, smoothies and vitamin waters that contain herbal elements and exotic ingredients such as guarana, ginseng and ginkgo biloba but the amount of these products found in these drinks are far below that expected to produce benefits or cause adverse effects. They are simply a marketing ploy.

This FAQ document has been developed by Food Active (Health Equalities Group).

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