

What Are We to Drink?

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When summer heat or exercise increases our need for fluids, one warning is widely disseminated by public health agencies—

- Avoid the use of alcoholic or caffeinated beverages; *they dehydrate instead of replacing lost fluids*.
- Highly sugared beverages have the same tendency.

Of those recommended for use, **water tops the list**. Even Jesus is reported to promise that one who gives a cup of cold water to one in need, in the name of a disciple, will not lose his/her reward (Matthew 10:38). In many nations, Mexico, Kenya, and many others, the public water system does not provide safe water. There, bottled water is necessary for safety. In the USA it generally is not necessary to drink water from a bottle except in times of a disaster, such as when a flood contaminates the public supply. **Many Americans are unnecessarily paying more for a gallon of water than they are for a gallon of gasoline when study after study has shown bottled water in the USA is no more safe than that from the taps of monitored public systems**. In fact, the Food and Drug administration is constantly warning those who use the bottled water regularly to be sure they, and especially their children, get fluoride from some other source to protect their teeth. Fluoride has proven its worth for tooth protection in the public water supplies on which most of the nation depends. Bottled water, in general, lacks this source of tooth protection.

There may be times of excessive loss of body fluids through sweating, diarrhea, vomiting, burns, etc. **when water is not enough to rehydrate the body**. Electrolytes that keep the heart in sync, blood pressure controlled and otherwise sustain life are lost with the body fluids. In these cases sodium chloride (ordinary salt) is the one most in need of replacement, as is apparent from the salty taste of sweat. If one is able to eat, potassium is easily replaced by either animal or vegetable food. Sodium chloride is not so abundant in these foods, and salt tablets are dangerous in that they increase the loss of potassium and irritate the stomach. In these cases of excessive sweating or illness there may also be depletion of glucose that contributes to weakness and exhaustion. Too much plain water taken in this condition can result in water intoxication which can also be fatal.

So for most active people, water is all that is needed, but in some situations, some kind of replacement may be essential. **Sports drinks** (not to be confused with “energy drinks” [page 3] which are without virtue) have been created to fill this need. In general they carry glucose (about half the sugar of other sugary beverages) with very small amounts of electrolytes. A preferable beverage is to dilute real orange juice with half water. And in cases when life is threatened by the loss of fluids, the recommended rehydration formula is very simple: six teaspoons sugar, 1 teaspoon salt in a liter (just over 1 quart) of safe water, given in small amounts until the victim is recovered enough to drink and eat on his/her own.

Well water should always be tested by Public Health agencies before use. It can carry nitrates and bacteria that cause serious illness, impaired growth in children, and in some cases spontaneous abortion.

Milk is a recommended beverage because of its valuable nutrition

- ✓ Both its quantity of and excellent quality **protein** complement the plant proteins in the diet, making them available in “complete” protein pools.

- ✓ Its generous supply of **Calcium** is in a form easily absorbed and is accompanied by generous supplies of **potassium** with which calcium works in concert.
- ✓ Its **Riboflavin** protects eyes from damage by light, and its **vitamins A and D** promote health of eyes, flesh and bones.
- ✓ Its generous supply of other **B vitamins**, including Vitamin B12, which is found only in animal foods, promotes a stable nervous system.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend at least three eight ounce servings a day as a beverage or as other equivalent foods, yogurt, cheese, soups, puddings, etc.

Although soy “**milk**” is marketed as a healthful product, in all its nutrients it is *seriously inferior to cow’s milk*. Only when commercially made with many additives does it approach the nutrition of real milk, and then only in those items added. It has its place in cases of certain allergies but in no way should be substituted for the real thing under the illusion that it is equal to or superior to real milk.

For **warm, not hot, drinks**, Section 86 recommends drinks made from grains, especially barley. Barley grains, whole or cracked, may be lightly toasted in a skillet or oven, steeped in boiling water, cooled to 120 degrees or less and drunk with or without honey or other sweetener and/or milk added. Postum, made from wheat bran and molasses, has been on the market many years. It is expensive but convenient to use. The Seventh Day Adventists have formulated beverages from soy and grains that one might find profitable to investigate.

When **commercial herb “teas”** are used, *care must be used* to know just what is in the blend.

- Many herbs have medicinal properties that should not be consumed on a regular basis.
- Others contain caffeine in quantity as is true of green or black teas and Yerba Mate.
- Tea and coffee, taken with food, reduce the iron that one can absorb from that food.
- Guarana is especially high in caffeine.
- MaHuang, once used extensively for weight reduction, contains ephedra banned by the FDA because it endangers life and health.
- Comfrey is known to cause liver disease.
- Senna is strongly laxative.
- Chaparral is associated with developing hepatitis.
- Mint teas are generally considered safe except those that contain pennyroyal oils.
- Lemon grass and cinnamon bark are considered safe.

Regular sodas are generally made of sugars, acids, colors, flavors and preservatives, with caffeine in the most popular. No vitamins, minerals or phytochemicals are included in most of them. 12 ounces Mt. Dew carries 170 Calories, 12 ounces Sprite, 140. **The USDA estimates, on the average, one 12 ounce can per day of soda for one year can account for 16 pounds of excess weight. One twenty ounce bottle a day for one year can account for 26 pounds of weight gain.** One twenty ounce bottle of Classic Coca Cola carries 250 Calories labeled as 2.5 servings of 100 Calories each. Twenty ounces of A&W Root beer has 300 Calories labeled as 120 Calories per serving.

Diet sodas contain the same ingredients as regular sodas except that artificial sweeteners replace the sugar, thus reducing the Calories provided. Phenylalanine in aspartame requires all PKU sufferers to avoid it and pregnant mothers to take care in its use. That is why there is a red dot on sodas sweetened with aspartame. Although labeled as Calorie free, aspartame does carry about two Calories for every teaspoon of sugar it displaces. *To keep the Calorie count low enough to be called zero per serving, many beverages containing aspartame also contain saccharine or another sweetener for at least a part of its sweetening.*

Sugary drinks and punches are nutrient poor and have the same weight gaining potential of sodas.

- Country time “lemonade” is not lemonade at all. It is sugar, acid, flavors and preservatives without any nutritious redemption.
- Cool Aid has tried to disguise itself as nutritious for marketing purposes but if any vitamin C is added, it is essentially irrelevant.
- Sunny D, with its effort to make itself appear superior to orange juice, has a total of 2 1/2 teaspoons orange juice in each 8 ounce serving. The rest is as deficient in nutrients as the dry powders that only offer empty Calories, damaged teeth and flavor.

All of the regular sodas, diet sodas, sugary drinks and punches endanger teeth from the strong acid that is required to counteract the large amount of sugar or sweetener in the beverage. If used at all, these should be drunk through a straw and the teeth cleaned after their use.

Energy Drinks

Now so-called “energy drinks” have pervaded the market with all kinds of ingredients that most people identify as “herbs” and many of which are indeed classified as natural dietary supplements. As such they are not under the control of the Food and Drug Administration. In response to the petitions of hundreds of “Health Food” enthusiasts, Congress took away the ability of the FDA to see to it that such items are properly labeled and proven safe before they are marketed. As a result, **one entire serving of many of these “energy drinks” offers less real energy than one peanut M&M, and contains huge amounts of stimulants and other substances not easily identifiable by most consumers but frequently dangerous to health.** Here are a few:

CAFFEINE - An addictive stimulant to the central nervous system.

- Affects behavior, bone mineral metabolism, heart rhythm.
- Diuretic.
- Has negative nutritional consequences for children.
- Frequently not on the label when present in plant forms.

YERBA MATE - Leaves with caffeine comparable to coffee.

GUARANA - Seeds 4 times richer in caffeine than coffee beans.

GINSENG - A stimulant for the central nervous system purported to increase brain efficiency, improve reflexes, increase endurance.

Eleutherococcus Senticosus (Siberian Ginseng)

Panax Quinquifolium (American Ginseng)

- Journal of The American Medical Association reports ginseng: Increased blood pressure, disturbed sleep, caused skin problems, depression, nervousness, hormonal disturbances (disruption of the menstrual cycle, increased menstrual flow and premenstrual stress).
- American Herbalist Guild, says American Panax varieties especially are not for children. Headaches, increased blood pressure, increase in the level of sex hormones cited.
- June, 2006 Harvard Medical Letter – ginseng side effects include insomnia, vaginal bleeding and headaches.

SCHIGANDRA - a non-irritating aphrodisiac - a drug enhancing sexual desire. A male tonic with adaptogenic qualities. (Do your teens need their sexual desires enhanced?)

Adaptogens - Phytomedicine - herbs purported to have the ability to increase the body’s resistance to stress by stimulating a nonspecific response arising from stress to the neuro-endocrine system. Supposed to help alleviate physical and mental stress.

REISHIL - Reishi Mushrooms used by herbologists to stimulate the immune systems of cancer and AIDS patients. Side effects include dry nose and throat, nausea, vomiting and other gastro-

intestinal symptoms, itchiness, increased risk of bleeding, hypotension (Low Blood Pressure).

ASTRAGALUS (LOCOWEED) High in Selenium, an essential nutrient, but highly toxic in excess.

Animals go mad (loco) then die! Diuretic.

GUANABANA - a native Carribean fruit of the custard apple family. A soursop. Nutritional analysis not yet available.

AGAVE - sweet cactus fiber used instead of sugar.

These generally essentially energyless “energy drinks” are sold for exorbitant prices, \$2.00 or more per can, and often marketed to the very young.

- XS readily admits they designed their 8.4 ounce can so small children could handle it more easily. One 8.4 ounce XS can has more caffeine than two 12 ounce Coca Colas!
- Red Bull and Monster also use the small cans for their expensive and highly stimulating product.
- Advocare markets their product carrying 60 milligrams caffeine to 4 year olds and up. That’s more than is in a 12 ounce can of Mt. Dew which has a whopping 55 milligrams. Advocare has a 120 milligram caffeine product for those 12 years and up!
- Fuze, one bottle that does carry 160 Calories of energy in its sixteen ounce container boasts 2% orange juice. That means there is 1 teaspoon orange juice in each 8 ounce serving, two teaspoonfuls in the bottle. They claim Vitamins A,C, and E but do not give amounts so there is no way to know whether they are significant. ***They do give the selenium content, however, and that is scary. Each serving has 160 micrograms selenium. The bottle has 320 mcg. That is eight or more times the recommended daily intake for children under 12 years, nearly six times the RDI for all ages up to seventy-five years. The contents of one bottle provides more than twice the highest level considered safe for children of 12 years and exceeds the limits of safety for people in their twenties. Selenium is the mineral that makes “loco weed” deadly forage for many animals.***
- SoBe also has sugars for energy, 130 Calories per 8 ounce serving. But the bottle holds 20 ounces, 325 Calories with ginseng, astragalus (loco weed) and yerba mate (caffeine source) to provide the stimulation.

One medical evaluation says, "**Energy Drinks are a witches brew. We are playing with something we do not understand and the long term consequences are unclear.**" No one of them should ever be chosen for any age. The risks are too great!