



Bay Area Nutrition &
Physical Activity Collaborative

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SODA

QUESTION:

Is diet soda better than regular soda?

ANSWER:

Diet soda does not contain the sugar and calories that regular soda does, but it is still not considered a healthy drink alternative. Although most of the artificial sweeteners used in diet sodas have been deemed safe (see below), diet sodas, like regular sodas, provide no nutritive value and also contain phosphoric acid, an ingredient that could increase the risk of bone loss later in life.

QUESTION:

Are artificial sweeteners safe?

ANSWER:

Artificial sweeteners are widely used to reduce or replace the sugar in foods and drinks while keeping the taste and reducing the calories. Based on years of research, the Food and Drug Administration and other agencies worldwide find that most artificial sweeteners are safe. Common sweeteners include: Equal® or Nutrasweet® (aspartame) in the blue packet; Splenda® (sucralose) in the yellow packet and Sweet N Low® (saccharin) in the pink packet.

QUESTION:

Are energy drinks a healthy beverage option?

ANSWER:

“Energy drink” is a term created by the beverage industry. Energy drinks are not considered to be healthy as they contain extremely large amounts of sugar and caffeine, along with some vitamins and herbal ingredients. Examples of energy drinks include Red Bull and Rockstar. These beverages are not recommended for children and adolescents because they may cause an elevation in blood pressure.

QUESTION:

Are sports drinks, electrolyte replacement drinks and vitamin waters healthy beverage options?

ANSWER:

Sports drinks and electrolyte replacement drinks can be healthy options for people participating in endurance events to increase liquid intake, replace electrolytes and provide energy. Most people, however, do not need sports drinks since regular food and beverage intake is sufficient to replace electrolytes lost during moderate physical activity. Vitamin waters are made with distilled water, fructose, electrolytes and vitamins, and some varieties may also contain caffeine. Like sports drinks and electrolyte replacement drinks, vitamin waters are not unhealthy, but can be expensive and are not necessary if one eats a well-balanced diet and is adequately hydrated.

QUESTION:

How does juice compare to soda?

ANSWER:

100% fruit juices may have about as many calories as sodas and other sweetened soft drinks, but they also contain vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and some fiber. It is best to limit the intake of fruit juice and instead eat more whole fruits because they retain all their nutrients and are more filling than juice.