

Worst 'Healthy' Drinks - And What You Should Drink Instead

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Staying hydrated can be great for your body. Drink enough of the right liquids and your mood will improve, your focus will sharpen, your heart will beat stronger, and you'll be less likely to suffer from headaches and fatigue. All that, plus if you pick the right potions, you'll receive beneficial nutrients, antioxidants and protein as a chaser.

Bottoms up, right? Not so fast. Some bottles are better than others, as you're about to learn. Too many Americans are problem drinkers — and I'm not talking about bourbon for breakfast. As a nation, we love high-sugar, high-calorie drinks like sodas and smoothies; a whopping 21 percent of American's calorie intake comes from drinks, and that's an increase of 150 calories since 1977. The big-bottom line: Half of that caloric payload comes from sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, fruit punch, and other sweet drinks.

The sad part is: Nobody actually needs any of those calories. Water — by the glass and in the foods you eat — should be plenty to top your tank. But if you find it kind of bland, we hear you. That's why we're slapping warning labels on the big-calorie guzzlers, and pointing you toward the thirst-quenchers that won't make you fat.

Cheers.

Iced Coffee

Drink This

Dunkin' Donuts Caramel Crème Iced Latte (16 oz)

260 calories

9 g fat

40 g sugars

Not That

Starbucks 2% Iced Dulce de Leche Latte (16 oz)

420 calories

16 g fat

52 g sugars

In the hierarchy of espresso drinks, lattes sit squarely at the bottom. That's because they're more milk than java, and are susceptible to huge pumps of sugar syrup from eager-to-please baristas. A macchiato gives the same caffeine kick for a tiny fraction of the caloric cost by swapping out the excess steamed milk for a crown of frothed milk. It's a simple but meaningful switch for caffeine junkies looking for a healthier fix. For other easy foods swaps for effortless weight loss — without ever having to diet again — [try these fabulous fifteen](#).

Protein Shakes

Drink This

Slim Fast High Protein Extra Creamy Strawberry (11.5 oz can)

190 calories

5g fat

13 g sugars

Not That!

Boost Plus High Protein Strawberry (8 oz bottle)

240 calories

6 g fat

16 g sugars

Besides having fewer calories and sugar than the smaller Boost shake, the Slim Fast drink also has more protein and five extra grams of fiber, which means it will work harder at keeping your belly full in the hours after you sip it.

Yogurt Smoothie

Drink This

Dannon Light & Fit Strawberry Banana Smoothie

70 calories

12 g sugars

Not That!

Stonyfield Farm Organic Wild Berry Smoothie

150 calories

25 g sugars

The Stonyfield smoothie is smaller but more than doubles up on the calories and sugar in the Dannon Light. Don't be fooled by the "organic" name — this yogurt smoothie is thick with added sugars, which spikes your blood sugar and tells your body to start storing fat — not the best way to start your day.

The Dannon Light shake jumpstarts your morning metabolism with a nice protein kick, but spares you the sickly Stonyfield sweetness. Watch out wherever, whenever for added sugars by avoiding this great list of [the most sugar-packed foods in America!](#)

Functional Beverage

Drink This

Dasani Plus Orange Tangerine Vitamin Enhanced Water (20-oz bottle)

0 calories

0 g sugars

Not That!

Snapple Agave Melon Antioxidant Water (20-oz bottle)

140 calories

33 g sugars

If you were fooled by the words "agave" and "antioxidant," don't be embarrassed — for a product that's supposedly water, it's totally shocking how many calories and grams of sugar are packed into this fraudulent "health" beverage. But that doesn't mean you should run the other way when you see an enhanced water; in fact, adding a little flavor (such as the orange tangerine in the Dasani water) can make staying hydrated easier and more pleasant — without adding calories or sugar.

Bottled Beverage

Drink This

Sobe Lean Blackberry Currant (20-oz bottle)

15 calories

2 g sugars

Not That!

Sobe Lizard Lava (20-oz bottle)

310 calories

77 g sugars

To glance at these two mysterious containers, you might think they contained exactly the same liquid — they're both pink, they both come in a chunky glass bottle, they've both got some kind of creature on the label — but once you take a closer look at the nutrition facts, an entirely different story becomes clear. The Lizard Lava bottle contains about half a meal's worth of calories and as much sugar as 11 popsicles.

That doesn't exactly spell refreshment, does it? Instead try the other pink bottle, with Sobe's Lean Blackberry Currant. With only 15 calories and 2 grams of sugar in a bottle, it just goes to show you that you can't judge a drink by its bottle. In fact, make sure you're always on the lookout for things like [these sneaky "health" foods that aren't!](#) You'll be shocked.

Energy Drink

Drink This

Monster Lo-Ball Java Monster Coffee + Energy (16-oz can)

100 calories

8 g sugars

Not That!

Rockstar Original (16-oz can)

280 calories

62 g sugars

I'll put it all out on the table here: I'm not a big fan of energy drinks. It's much healthier to boost

energy by exercising, eating healthy foods, and getting enough sleep. But let's face it — sometimes you're desperate for a pick-me-up, and it's easy to reach for one of those shiny cans of liquid fuel.

However, if you guzzle down a can of Rockstar Original, I'm pretty sure you're just going to end up with a jittery buzz instead of the boost you're seeking — with 62 grams of sugars, you're looking at a major sugar crash not too far down the road. Better to stick with a low-sugar, low-calorie option like Java Monster Coffee + Energy.

Juice Imposter

Drink This

Fuze Slenderize Strawberry Melon (18.5-oz bottle)

23 calories

4.5 g sugars

Not That!

Arizona Kiwi Strawberry (23.5-oz can)

360 calories

84 g sugars

Unfortunately, most of the drinks that come in flashy containers and purport themselves to be juice quite simply aren't. That goes for both our "Drink This" and our "Not That" option here — even the healthier Fuze drink is only about 5 percent juice. That said, it's also a low-carb, low-sugar drink that provides nutrients, antioxidants, and vitamins, so it's not all bad — unlike Arizona's "juice." Bottom line: These days, if you want juice, you probably need to squeeze it yourself.

Kids' Juice

Drink This

Minute Maid Kids Multi-Vitamin Orange Juice

120 calories

24 g sugars

Not That!

Welch's Grape Juice

170 calories

40 g sugars

Kids love grape juice for one reason: It's loaded with sugar. That also means it's loaded with calories. Grape just ain't so great. On the other extreme, Minute Maid's enhanced orange juice is mother nature's multi-vitamin, providing your kids with monster doses of calcium and vitamin D for bone growth and protection, plus a host of powerful antioxidants. To make the best choices for your kids when eating out, check out this great comprehensive listing of [the Best and Worst Restaurants for Kids!](#)

Kids' Drink

Drink This

Capri Sun Tropical Fruit Roarin' Waters (6.8-oz pouch)

35 calories

9 g sugars

Not That!

Sunny D with Calcium (8-oz serving)

140 calories

31 g sugars

If you believe the commercials, stocking your fridge with Sunny D will make you the coolest mom (or dad) in the neighborhood, and your kids will be smiling and thanking you, and you'll be wearing a cashmere sweater, and your whole house will be bathed in soft, buttery sunlight. Right. Well, believe it or not, if you're interested in giving your kids a fun drink that's actually reasonably healthy, hand them one of those silver Capri Sun pouches — OK, so they're not exactly a health drink, but they're better than Sunny D — cashmere or no cashmere.

For other belt-busting beverages, [don't miss these other drinkable disasters](#). And for other incredible tips to keep the weight off for good, [take this eye-opening quiz to learn how much you can eat for just 100 calories](#).

