



## NUTRI-BYTES

### Beverages...How much is enough?

#### How can beverages contribute to obesity?

Over the past three decades, Americans have increased their caloric intake by 150 to 300 calories per day with about 50% of these added calories coming from calorically sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks and fruit drinks. Currently, about 20% of total calories typically come from beverages (rather than the recommended 10-14% of total calories). Research has shown that beverages are not as satiating or filling as foods. In addition, beverage intake is not associated with appropriate caloric compensation (that is, intake of other foods is not reduced), leading to excessive calories and weight gain.

#### What is the Beverage Guidance System?

While the USDA Food Guide Pyramid gives guidelines for the types and amounts of *foods* to include in a healthy diet, there have been no such guidelines related to *beverages*. The **Beverage Guidance System** is a new set of recommendations for the type and amount of beverages to promote health in those persons over 6 years of age, proposed by Popkin and a panel of experts\*.

#### What types of beverages and how much of each should I include in my diet?

Beverages are ranked from the most preferred to least preferred, based on calories, nutrients, and adverse and beneficial health effects. The experts suggest that 80% of beverage intake should be from water and unsweetened tea and coffee, and 20% from low-fat milk, juice, alcohol, and calorically sweetened beverages. The following fluid recommendations are based on a person with an energy requirement of 2200 calories per day. Remember that 8 ounces equal 1 cup.

- **Water** **20-50 fluid ounces per day**
  - Water should be the **major** beverage in your diet.
- **Tea & coffee** **0-40 fluid ounces per day**
  - Caffeine intake should be limited to 400 mg/day (as in about 4 cups of coffee).
- **Low-fat milk, skim milk & soy beverages** **0-16 fluid ounces per day**
  - These drinks provide calcium, vitamin D, high-quality protein, and other nutrients.
- **Noncalorically sweetened beverages** **0-32 fluid ounces per day**
  - Diet sodas and other diet drinks provide water and sweetness without calories.
- **Beverages with some nutritional/health value, but relatively high in calories**
  - Fruit & vegetable juices **0-8 fluid ounces per day**
  - Whole milk **0 fluid ounces per day**
  - Alcohol **0-1 drink for women; 0-2 drinks for men**
- **Calorically sweetened, nutrient-poor beverages**
  - Soft drinks & fruit drinks **0-8 fluid ounces per day**

\*For more details, please see: Popkin BA, Armstrong LE, Bray GM, Caballero B, Balz F, Willett WC. A new proposed guidance system for beverage consumption in the United States. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2006;83:529-42.



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October 2007