

health smarts

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Drink Healthy This Summer

The weather outside just keeps getting better, and the summer months will be here fast.

It's great to enjoy a few beers, some wine or other tasty drinks to cool down this time of year. However, you'd be surprised how quickly those drink calories can add up and expand your waistline.

Have no fear; there are ways you can still enjoy great summer drinks and keep your weight under control. These are some great options to keep you slim and trim this summer and dodge those extra pounds.

Try A Bloody Mary

Everyone knows alcohol is a quick and sure way to pack on the pounds, but not all drinks are created equal.



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There are alcoholic drinks with less calories than others. Check out the chart at right to learn about some better choices if you decide to indulge.

A popular summer drink that can even be good for weight loss is a bloody mary. The foods that go into making a bloody mary actually have a thermogenic effect, so even though the chart shows it has 120 calories, the nutrients in the drink can really help to speed up your metabolism and burn fat.

Estimated Caloric Content of Alcoholic Beverages

Beverage	Serving Size	Calories	Cocktails:	Serving Size	Calories
Beer	12 oz.	150	Bloody mary	4.6 oz.	120
Light beer	12 oz.	110	Chocolate martini	2.5 oz.	188
Dark beer	12 oz.	168	Cosmopolitan	2.5 oz.	131
Non-alcoholic beer	12 oz.	70	Daiquiri	2.7 oz.	137
Distilled spirits (whiskey, rum, gin, vodka, tequila, etc.)	1.5 oz.	100	Gin and tonic	7 oz.	189
Dry dessert wine	5 oz.	198	Irish coffee	10.2 oz.	159
Sweet dessert wine	5 oz.	344	Kamikaze	3 oz.	180
Red wine	5 oz.	105	Mai tai	4.9 oz.	306
White wine	5 oz.	100	Martini (gin or vodka)	2 oz.	119
Sparkling white wine	5 oz.	106	Manhattan	2.1 oz.	132
			Margarita	6.3 oz.	327
			Mudslide	12 oz.	820
			Piña colada	8 oz.	312
			Rum and coke	12 oz.	361
			Screwdriver	7 oz.	208
			Whiskey sour	3 oz.	120

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services

Leaving out the vodka and going with a virgin bloody mary is the healthiest way to go. However, having a regular bloody mary doesn't necessarily make it unhealthy because vodka has very little sugar (almost 0 grams).

Drink Water

So you're covered for the parties, but what about the rest of the day?

First and foremost, drink lots of water. Water helps to metabolize fats supporting healthy body composition, so it can help to keep those excess pounds away. Water can also help stretch the stomach, making you feel full and therefore reduce the risk of overeating.

It can also help you avoid overeating in another way. You can think you're hungry and grab something to eat when you should be grabbing a glass of water.

Water helps regulate the bowels, as well. Getting them moving regularly is important to help reduce a bloated

stomach, which makes you look bigger than you really are.

Having a bottle of water nearby throughout the day will help increase your water consumption. If you're not a fan of plain water, try adding some lemons, limes, strawberries, mint, cucumbers, grapefruit or oranges.

Switch It Out

Soft drinks are loaded with sugar, and too much can really wreak havoc on your weight.



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A 12-ounce can of regular cola has 39 grams of sugar, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). That's almost 8 teaspoons of sugar, and the USDA recommends women get no more than 6 teaspoons a day, while men should get 9 teaspoons.

And don't think you can just switch to diet pop. Research shows artificial sweeteners such as aspartame can actually stimulate appetite, increase carbohydrate cravings and stimulate fat storage.

If you like bubbles, switch to sparkling water and add sweetness with stevia, which has a glycemic index (GI) of 0 and has 0 grams of carbohydrates (regular table sugar has a GI of 80 and 100 grams of carbohydrates). Add fresh mint and berries to it to give it some flavor.

Scrap Sports Drinks

Colas aren't the only popular drink packed with sugar.

Many flavored sports drinks such as Gatorade are marketed as a healthy choice to rehydrate you after a workout, competition or when you're hot — but they're not. Gatorade and some drinks like it are packed with sugar, as well as artificial flavorings and colorings.

A great alternative is coconut water, but be careful. Some coconut waters are loaded with excess sugar. Compare the different options at the store to make sure you get one with less sugar.

You can also make your own rehydration drink with these two options:

1. Combine 1 liter of water with 1 cup of orange juice and ½ teaspoon of sea salt
2. Combine 1 liter of water with 1 tablespoon of maple syrup and ½ teaspoon of sea salt

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Make Your Own

Don't be fooled by store-bought juices and iced teas either. They're also full of sugar.

If you want to drink juice, make your own at home and make your base with vegetables such as spinach, kale, celery, cucumber and broccoli. For extra sweetness, you can add beets, carrots, apples or pears, but keep the fruits to a minimum as they contain fructose and high

amounts can increase your weight.

It's also best to make your own iced tea. Green tea contains some caffeine but has the advantage of fat-

burning properties, and it's high in antioxidants.

Make a batch of green tea or fruit-based teas and keep them in the fridge. Add stevia if you would like it sweeter.

Now, you have several great and easy options to make healthier choices this summer to help you feel and look great.

For more information, visit eatwelllivewellwithsci.com.

Kylie James, CNP, and Joanne Smith, CNP, are the authors of Eat Well, Live Well with Spinal Cord Injury, the first book dedicated to nutrition and spinal-cord injury. ■



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