

Rethink Your Drink!!!

We have all heard our children say....

"Can't I have just one more juice box today?"

"Can I have soda with supper instead of milk?"

"I really need that Gatorade for my basketball game!"

But it's time to rethink our drinks for both ourselves and for our families. According to the American Obesity Coalition, the average American drinks 1.6 cans of soda pop a day, more than 500 cans a year. Soda drinking is particularly rampant among teenagers. Data indicates that soft drinks account for 13 percent of a teenager's caloric intake - by far the largest source of calories in his or her diet.

Furthermore, study from Harvard demonstrated a strong link between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and childhood obesity. Not only do sugar-sweetened drinks likely lead to obesity, they are also associated with tooth decay and weakening bones.

And so, with all this sugar swirling around in our student's drinks, I decided to show them exactly how much sugar they are drinking when they open that juice pouch. At each school, I went to the lunch room and observed what students were choosing to drink at lunch. Then I took a few examples and measured out how many grams of sugar they were drinking. I have displayed the sugar next to the drink container on the bulletin board. It's hard to really see the sugar from the picture, so here is what I found:

- Water = 0 grams of sugar = 0 tsp. sugar
- White Milk = 11 grams of sugar = 2 ¼ tsp. sugar
- Small Juice Box = 14 grams of sugar = 2 ¾ tsp. sugar
- Chocolate Milk = 18 grams of sugar = 3 ½ tsp. sugar
- Juice Pouch = 25 grams of sugar = 5 tsp. sugar

- Hi-C = 25 grams of sugar = 5 tsp. sugar
- Can of Coca-Cola = 39 grams of sugar = 8 tsp. sugar
- Large Gatorade = 53 grams of sugar = 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. sugar

I am hoping that students actually physically seeing the sugar they are consuming will make them stop and really think about what they are putting into their bodies. It's time to...

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