

## Be Aware of Sugar in Your Drinks

Be Aware of Sugar in Your Drinks is one of our 5 key messages and for good reason! Sugary drinks are addictive, especially when consumed by children and teenagers. One in six Aussie teens drinks at least 5.2 kilograms of sugar each year from sugary drinks alone!! We often discuss the relation between sugary drinks, weight gain, obesity and diabetes; with less than one can of soft drink per day increasing your risk of type 2 diabetes by 22% and contributing up to 6.75 kg of weight per year. In today's NutEd we want to draw attention to another disease closely linked to sugary drink consumption... Tooth decay!

Tooth decay is caused by bacteria in the mouth using the sugar from foods and drinks to produce acids that dissolve and damage teeth. Both regular and "diet" soft drinks, as well as juices and cordials have high acidity levels that also cause tooth erosion also. Regular loss of tooth enamel from erosion can lead to teeth sensitivities, cavities, and eventually more serious tooth decay problems requiring work such as root canals. Dental treatment for tooth decay problems can be extremely expensive, with the average cost of a cavity filling between \$100 and \$300 and a root canal costing between \$2000 and \$3400! The best way to avoid these high dental costs? Keep your teeth healthy by being aware of sugar in your drinks and choosing water instead.

Sugary drinks can be especially harmful for young children, with Australians aged 15 and over having an average of nearly 13 decayed, missing or filled teeth. Craig Sinclair, Head of Prevention at Cancer Council Victoria states:

"It's sadly no surprise that tooth decay is hitting Australian kids hard, given the overwhelming availability of sugary drinks. Not only are there significantly more sugary drink choices available today, they are everywhere our kids look. Ironically, they're even in venues designed to help our kids be healthy, such as sports centres, sporting clubs, as well as places they visit regularly like train stations, festivals and events,"



So how can we promote our communities to be aware of sugar in their drinks and choose water instead?

- Enhance your water! Add in citrus, berries and even herbs like mint to infuse your water with delicious flavours.
- Craving Fizz? Soda and sparkling water contain no added sugars and are a great choice.
- Home-brewed iced tea is a fun way to cut down on sugar in your drinks. Head to the Country Kitchens Website for some great flavour combos.
- Keep a water bottle within arm's reach, this will help to remind you to constantly sip throughout the day.
- Do not have it available! The best way to reduce children's sugary drinks consumption is to not have it available in the home. Young children will role model their parents, if you choose water, they will be more likely to as well.

If you would like to read more about sugary drinks, [Rethink Sugary Drink](#) is a website with a lot of good, credible information as well as infographics and posters that can be printed and used at showcases. The image displayed above is one from their collection of resources.