When it comes to health and weight loss, most people focus on what they eat. Likewise, the government’s recommendations for healthy eating—called the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*—focus primarily on foods.¹

**Water: An Important Nutrient For Life**

Increasing evidence shows that what you drink is as important as what you eat. With little guidance on what to sip, it’s no surprise that many children and adults are choosing high-calorie beverages that increase added sugars in their diet.

Take a look at these startling statistics: half of all children and adults drink at least one sugar-sweetened beverage per day and those beverages are the leading source of added sugars in the diet.² What’s more, about 20 percent of our total daily energy intake is from beverages alone.³,⁴,⁵

Meanwhile, many individuals—especially older adults—don’t get enough water or total fluids for optimal health.⁶ One study found that adults drank, on average, just over 1 liter or about four, 8-ounce glasses of water (bottled and tap) per day. And, the total fluid intake from all beverages failed to meet the Institute of Medicine’s recommendations for water among 95 percent of men and 83 percent of women over 70 years old.⁶ The Institute of Medicine recommends about 2 Liters and 3 Liters of water (from all beverages) for women and men respectively. (2L = 68 oz. and 3L = 101 oz.)⁷

Two out of three American adults and one out of three children are overweight or obese.⁸,⁹ Urging people to drink more zero-calorie beverages, like water and unsweetened sparkling water, in place of sugar-sweetened beverages may be key strategy to help people meet the recommendations outlined in the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.*

### What Are Health Authorities Recommending?

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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Beverage and Added Sugar Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>American Diabetes Association</strong></td>
<td>Avoid sugary drinks like regular soda, fruit punch, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sweet tea, and other sugary drinks. These will raise blood glucose and can provide several hundred calories in just one serving. <strong>American Diabetes Association. What can I drink? 2014; Available at: <a href="http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/making-healthy-food-choices/what-can-i-drink.html">http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/making-healthy-food-choices/what-can-i-drink.html</a>.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>American Academy of Pediatrics</strong></td>
<td>Water, not sports or energy drinks, should be the principle source of hydration for children and adolescents. 100% fruit juice should be limited to 4 to 6 oz. per day for children 1 to 6 years old and 8 to 12 oz. for 7 to 18 years old. <strong>Committee on Nutrition and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness. Sports drinks and energy drinks for children and adolescents: are they appropriate? Pediatrics. 2011 Jun;127(6):1182-9.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>World Health Organization</strong>**</td>
<td>Limiting intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy is part of a healthy diet. A further reduction to less than 5% of total energy is suggested for additional health benefits. Sugar intake can be reduced by limiting the consumption of foods and drinks containing high amounts of sugars (i.e. sugar-sweetened beverages, sugary snacks and candies) <strong>World Health Organization. Healthy diet fact sheet. January, 2015. Available at: <a href="http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs394/en/">http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs394/en/</a>.</strong></td>
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### References: