

## **Rethink Your Drink**

### **Goals:**

- *Students will learn the importance of staying hydrated*
- *Students will be able to identify healthy beverage choices*

**Audience:** 3rd

### **Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:**

- *Wuice (Recipe)*
- *Smoothie (Recipe)*

### **Materials:**

- Large clear cup
- Sugar cubes
- Rethink Your Drink Visual
- If possible, bring in empty beverage containers (water bottle, milk cartons, soda can, juice box, energy drink).

**Background information:** The average US child consumes around 22 teaspoons of added sugar each day, and a US teen consumes nearly 34 teaspoons! We will see how a diet high in refined (added) sugar can negatively impact one's health. The goal is not to tell children how much sugar they can or cannot have in a day; rather, the idea is to empower children with knowledge about how much sugar is in items (and how to read food labels) so that they can make better choices.

### **Lesson:**

Leader: Raise your hand and tell me the top 3 best beverage choices.

1. Water
2. Plain Milk
3. 100% juice

Why do you think soda, energy drinks and flavored milks did not make the top 3?

These beverages contain a lot of sugar!

What do you think can happen if you consume too much sugar?  
Consuming too much sugar can negatively impact your healthy. It can: increase your risk for diabetes, cause cavities, contribute to weight gain, and cause an upset stomach.

Sugar is often added to beverages. I have 6 beverages: water, plain milk, 100% juice, soda, chocolate milk, and an energy drink.

Today, we're going to look at the sugar content of each of these beverages.

(Hold up a sugar cube). Each one of these sugar cubes equals one teaspoon.

(Hold up first picture). Starting with water, how many teaspoons of sugar do you think are in this bottle of water?

None!

How about plain low-fat milk?

This is a tricky question. Milk contains lactose, a natural sugar. Plain milk contains 2 teaspoons of natural sugar, but no added sugar (put 2 teaspoons of sugar in the cup).

The reason I put two teaspoons of sugar in the cup is because every time we consume sugar whether it is natural sugar, such as lactose, or if it is added sugar, such as table sugar, your body releases insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body absorb sugar. Think of insulin as a messenger; it lets the cells in your body know that sugar is on its way. Without insulin, our cells can't absorb sugar.

If we eat a lot of sugar every single day for a long time, we can wear these messengers out, and then the cells in our body cannot absorb sugar. As a result, our body gets worn down and sick.

**The sugar cubes that I put in the cup represent all types of sugar, not just table sugar.**

How does chocolate milk compare to plain milk?

Chocolate milk has 3 ½ teaspoons of added sugar plus the 2 teaspoons of natural sugar (lactose). (Place 5 sugar cubes in the cup).

Next is a juice box with 100% juice. Although the sugar in 100% juice is natural (it is called fructose), it still raises your insulin levels, so it is important to limit juice to no more than one cup per day. This juice box has 5 teaspoons of natural sugar (put 5 sugar cubes in the cup).

Moving on to the energy drink, how many teaspoons do you think is in this entire 20 oz. container? 9 teaspoons (put 9 sugar cubes in the cup).

It is important to note, that the nutrition label that is listed on the container is for one serving (one cup), but this container has 2.5 cups, so you have to do the math to find out the nutrition information for the entire bottle.

Finally, how many teaspoons of sugar do you think are in this can of soda? There are 11 teaspoons of sugar in one can of soda (put 11 sugar cubes in the cup).

Some of the soda containers are much bigger than a 12 oz can; I've seen 24 oz plastic soda containers. If you drink those large sodas, you can consume up to 22 teaspoons of sugar (put 22 sugar cubes in the cup).

Why is it important to limit the amount of sugar in our diets?

Too much sugar can make us feel sleepy and can lead to cavities. If we consume too much sugar on a daily basis, we increase our risk for diabetes and weight gain.

When it comes to choosing a drink, it is best to stick to water and plain milk. 100% juice is okay in small amounts (no more than one cup per day). Flavored milk, energy drinks, and sodas contain a lot of added sugar, so if you choose to drink these beverages, remember to enjoy them every once in awhile.