

# Heart Disease is the #1 Killer of Women. Know Your Risks.

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## You're Sweet Enough

Eating and drinking a lot of added sugar is one probable cause of the obesity epidemic in the United States. Today more than 36% adults and 18% of children are considered obese or overweight. Sugar is also linked to increased risks for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and inflammation in the body.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting intake of added sugar to **6 teaspoons for women** and **9 teaspoons for men**. For reference, one 12-ounce can of cola contains about 8 teaspoons of added sugar, for about 130 calories. Unfortunately, Americans are consuming **22 and 30 teaspoons** of the sweet stuff each day.

When you think of sugar you think of cakes, pies, ice cream and candy. But did

you know that sugar sweetened beverages are the biggest source of added sugar in the American diet? Take a minute and think about what you drink in a typical day. Unless you are a true water lover, you may be getting some extra, unneeded calories through sodas, ice teas, energy and coffee drinks.

Added sugar also sneaks into seemingly "better for you" beverages, such as sports drinks, fruit drinks and flavored milks.

Some drinks that appear to be healthy may be high in calories and added sugars. Check servings per container and ingredients list. Keep in mind that added sugars go by many names, including sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, agave nectar and

honey. Here are important numbers to remember. There are 4 calories per gram of sugar and 4 grams per teaspoon. So if the label says it has 20 grams of sugar, that's 5 teaspoons, or about 80 calories from sugar.

But don't give up hope – or flavor! Family favorites like hot chocolate, lemonade, smoothies, fruit punch, chocolate milk and coffee drinks easily can be made at home with less added sugars.

Start with unsweetened beverages, then flavor to taste with additions like fruit, nonfat milk, low-calorie sweeteners, and herbs and spices.

Great recipes for beverages and more can be found at [recipes.splenda.com](http://recipes.splenda.com) and [heart.org/simplecooking](http://heart.org/simplecooking).

## You Are What You Drink

Our bodies are mostly made of water; it is in all of our cells, tissues, muscles, everywhere. Water helps to digest food, control the number of calories we eat and maintain weight, among other things. But did you also know that water helps the heart pump blood more easily through the blood vessels?

It is important to drink water every day and it is recommended that you should consume 96 ounces of water per day. But that can get challenging – and boring.

To ramp up the flavor of your water and help you reach your goal, try these simple tips:

- Add slices of oranges, lemons or cucumbers to your water.
- Try seltzers or sparkling water with a splash of 100% fruit juice.
- Fruits and veggies are heavy in water – watermelons, peaches, cucumbers, tomato and zucchini are excellent sources of H<sub>2</sub>O.
- Carry a refillable water bottle or have a permanent glass at your office desk to help you reach your daily goal.

## Spotlight in the Community

On Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, the Connecticut State Medical Society will partner with New Haven Alumnae – Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and Elm City Communities to host the "Make Life Sweet – Not your Drinks" health lesson. The lesson will review the health risks linked to high intakes of sugar-sweetened beverages and provide tips on how to reduce your intake. For information about the EmPOWERED to Serve health lessons, please visit [www.empoweredtoserve.org](http://www.empoweredtoserve.org).

For information on the 2017 Go Red For Women Luncheon go to <http://hartfordgoredluncheon.heart.org>

Visit [CTGoesRed.com](http://CTGoesRed.com) for more Information on Women's Heart Health

