What’s in Your Drink?  
Making Healthier Choices

Lisa Franzen-Castle, Extension Nutrition Specialist; Carol J. Schwarz, Extension Educator; and Ranae L. Aspen, Extension Associate

Lesson Goal:
Participants will learn about drink choices and ways to select healthy drinks that will benefit them and their family.

Lesson Objectives:
As a result of this lesson, participants will be able to:
• Evaluate and choose nutritious drinks for them and/or their family.
• Determine the cost of selecting drinks high in added sugars and/or calories and low in nutrients.
• Make healthier drink choices through goal setting to establish healthier habits.
• Discover ways to promote healthier drink choices within their community/organization.

Program Materials:
• “What’s in Your Drink” Participant’s Guide (HEF613), PowerPoint and handout of slides
• Bottles or cans of drinks. Examples: soda pop, fruit punch, sports drinks, and coffee drinks
• Flip chart or other method to post group results on money spent on drinks.
• Granulated sugar and a teaspoon to measure the amount of sugar in drinks or prefill bottles with representative amounts of sugar.
• Program evaluation

Before the Meeting:
Read the Leader’s and Participant’s Guides and review the PowerPoint. Decide which activities to use and gather supplies. You may want to ask participants to help by bringing drink containers that will assist in practicing reading labels.

At the Meeting (Introduction):
Calories in drinks are not hidden, but many people don’t realize just how many calories drinks can contribute to their daily intake. Calories from drinks can really add up. However, you have plenty of options for reducing the number of calories in what you drink. This lesson will help you become a savvy drink consumer and provide you with the knowledge to select drinks that taste great and are nutritious.

Activity 1 — Smart Drink Choice. Have participants fill out the “Smart Drink Choice” Activity. Tell participants that possible answers will be reviewed at the end of the lesson.

Activity 2 — What’s in Your Drink? PowerPoint. Show the PowerPoint and go over key points listed in the notes section of the PowerPoint.

Activity 3 — Calorie Content. Have drink containers available.
• Look at labels to check the calorie content and the serving size to determine the number of calories in the entire container.
• Sweeteners that add calories to beverages go by many different names and are not always obvious when looking at the ingredient list. Naturally occurring sugars are found naturally in foods such as fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose). Added sugars include any sugars or caloric sweeteners that are added to foods or beverages during processing or preparation (such as putting sugar in your coffee or adding sugar to your cereal). Added sugars (or added sweeteners) can include natural sugars such as white sugar, brown sugar and honey as well as other caloric sweeteners that are chemically manufactured (such as high-fructose corn syrup).
• Names for added sugars on labels include: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, fruit juice concentrates, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert...
sugar, malt sugar, molasses, raw sugar, sugar, sugar molecules ending in "ose" (dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, maltose, sucrose), and syrup.

Activity 4 — Sugar Content. Using the drink bottles or cans, check the ingredient label.

• Are any of the ingredients listed above on the label? If so, list the ingredient that sweetens your drink.
• Is it the first ingredient or farther down the list? (Ingredients are listed in order of amount by weight, in descending order.)
• Now determine the amount of sugar in each container. To do this, find the number of grams of sugar in each serving. Multiply that number by the number of servings. Then divide by 4. There are 4 grams of sugar per teaspoon. (To illustrate, have each person measure out teaspoons of sugar and display it on a small plate OR put the amount of sugar in each drink in the empty container.)

Activity 5 — Determining the Cost. Ask participants to write down answers to the following questions in their Participant Guide.

• How many added sugar and/or high calorie, low-nutrient drinks did you or your family have last week? (Don’t forget soda pop or coffee drinks from the quick shop, ball game, or when traveling.)
• What does each drink cost (on average)?
• Multiply the number of drinks by the cost.
• How much, on average, do you or your family spend in a year on soda pop, sports drinks, and juice drinks (not 100% juice)? [Multiply by 52 weeks]
• What time of the year do you or your family consume more of these types of drinks? (Do you have extra on weekends at the lake, bowling in the fall, or golfing in the summer?)
• Have participants report their number. Have someone keep track or write them down. Determine a group average.
• Ask participants: What could you have done with this money?

Activity 6 — Smart Drink Choice Activity Review. Review possible answers to the Smart Drink Choice Activity (located in the PowerPoint) and ask participants the following questions.

• Where there any surprises in the ranking of the drinks?
• How did you rank them and why?
• Are you willing to change how many beverages you drink that are high in added sugars and/or low in nutrients?

Activity 7 — Goal Setting: Go over goal setting. Is changing this behavior important to you and your family?

• Begin to examine what makes your favorite drinks important to you.
• It will be a challenge to choose things to drink that are lower in sugar, especially if you and your family consume a lot of drinks with added sugars and/or low in nutrients. How do you think you could start to reduce that amount?
• Before you decide your family goals, gather your family and explain why you want to discuss the changes you are about to make.
• Have participants write healthy drink goals in their guide. Go over SMART goals: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and trackable.

Activity 8 — Healthy Drink Choices in Your Community/Organization. Make a list of ways your community/organization is already encouraging healthy drink choices. Discuss ways to help your community/organization encourage healthy drink choices.

Summary:

Changing a habit or creating a new one can be hard. Remember that goals should be reviewed on a regular basis. New goals should be established after previous goals are met. Share your plans with others (extended family members, friends, co-workers) to help increase accountability.

Evaluation options include:

• Fill out a paper evaluation. Mail it to the address at the bottom of the form.
• Fill out an online evaluation (https://ssp.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_2tsQV2k6QtrrFdz) on electronic devices (laptop, tablet, or smartphone).
• Collect email addresses and email them the online evaluation link (https://ssp.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_2tsQV2k6QtrrFdz).

Follow up (optional):

The following are options for long-term goal setting. Collect participants’ emails and follow up with them three and/or six months post-lesson to see if they are meeting goals, or use social media to post tips, questions, and/or challenges. Resources for social media:

• www.joe.org/joe/2013august/tt2.php
• www.neafcs.org/assets/documents/journal/2012-jneafcs.pdf

Recommended follow-up resources include:

• “Rethink Your Drink,” www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html
• “Rethink Your Drink Campaign,” www.cdpf.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RethinkYourDrink-Resources.aspx