



Drink To Your Health: Tasty, Lower-Sugar Choices for Kids and Caregivers

60-minute lesson

GOAL

Encourage caregivers to offer more water to the children in their care and limit beverages with added sugar.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Understand how sugary drinks impact health.
- ✓ Make and taste a variety of healthy beverages.
- ✓ Practice identifying sugar on the Nutrition Facts Panel.

KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ Drinking more water and low-sugar drinks can help your kids avoid tooth decay, cavities, and other health problems – all while saving you money.
- ✓ You can make drinks at home with a few ingredients commonly found in the WIC package.
- ✓ Make your own drinks at home together – it's an activity for you and your kids to enjoy, and builds healthy habits.

MATERIALS

Flip chart or white board • Markers/pens • Name tags • Ingredients and equipment for your chosen recipes • Materials for Sugar Overload activity and Healthy Drinks Taste Test activity • Materials for kids' activity (if using - optional)

KIDS' ACTIVITY OPTIONS

We have provided a booklet of activities that can be used with kids. The following are suggestions for specific activities that may be complementary to what caregivers are learning in this lesson. **You are not limited to this list** – feel free to use whatever activities are most appropriate for your situation.

Note that some activities are written for the whole family, but can be easily modified for an activity with only kids. Pages correspond to number on the page unless noted.

- For younger kids:
 - Fruit vs. Juice, page 1-46
 - Fruit and Veggie Mystery Bag, page 2
- For older kids:
 - Healthy Drink Taste Test, page 28
 - Sugar Shocker Handout, page 82 of kid's activity bank
 - Snack and Drink Crossword, page 35
 - Label Reading Word Search, page 36

CAREGIVER HANDOUTS

We have provided a comprehensive set of handouts for each lesson that can be 1) used as references for the instructor to prepare for class 2) referenced verbally and/or visually during class to guide discussion 3) provided as take-homes for caregivers to reinforce what they learned in class and encourage further learning. **You are NOT required to provide all of these handouts as take-homes** (though you may if you wish). Feel free to pick and choose which you feel are most helpful and appropriate. However, we ask that **at a minimum you provide a printed copy of the recipe(s) you prepared in class, as well as the Making It Work at Home handout.**

Check off the handouts you plan to reference during class

- Drink to Your Health
- Cut Back on Added Sugar
- Reading Food Labels
- Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies
- Making it Work at Home**

RECIPE OPTIONS

Choose **a variety of beverages to prepare in advance for sampling in class**, including different variations on the same theme (e.g., two different types of smoothies). **Choose at least 2 beverages for hands-on preparation during class time.** The following chart provides some ideas. You may use other recipes if you wish – see CookingMatters.org/recipes for more ideas. If you are not using a Cooking Matters recipe, please be sure it contains only ingredients that are affordable and accessible for low-income caregivers, does not require fancy cooking tools, and follows healthy eating guidelines.

Drink Ideas: Use any drinks that are low in added sugar.			
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies handout	Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 0 minutes	Make a variety of smoothies in advance. Allow caregivers to taste the smoothies prepared in advance in addition to the smoothie they make in the lesson.	“A smoothie can be a great meal, especially when you need a quick breakfast for on-the-go. You can add whatever frozen fruits you like, some water, milk, or 100% juice, and even a vegetable like spinach. “If you freeze leftover fruit before it goes bad, this is a great way to use it up.” “Smoothies are a good way to get lots of nutrients along with calories from a drink, instead of drinking sugary beverages with lots of calories but little nourishment.”
Any of the drink options from Healthy Drinks Taste Test activity	Prep time: 5 -10 minutes Cook time: 0 minutes	Make a variety of flavored waters in advance. Allow caregivers to taste the flavored waters prepared in advance in addition to the flavored water they make in the lesson.	“Flavoring water with fruit or herbs is a great way to increase its appeal to kids who need to hydrate. You can just fill up a jar or pitcher and leave it in your fridge to use as needed!” “Cutting fruit juice with seltzer, or plain water, is a great way to save money by stretching out the juice AND a great way to reduce sugar for your kids.”

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
Raspberry Lime Fizz	Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 0		<p>“Cutting fruit juice with seltzer, or plain water, is a great way to save money by stretching out the juice AND a great way to reduce sugar for your kids.”</p> <p>“This recipe is a great healthy substitute for punch at parties – fewer ingredients, less sugar, but still pretty and refreshing!”</p>

CLASS TIME

PAPERWORK (5 MINUTES):

As caregivers arrive, have them complete the demographics portion of the participant survey and sign a waiver.

MAIN COURSE: LESSON TOPIC (50 MINUTES):

INTRODUCTION: (5 MINUTES)

1. **Welcome caregivers.** Introduce instructors and any other volunteers or helpers.
2. **Set expectations.** Explain that caregivers will learn how to improve health and save money by preparing healthy beverages at home. They will also learn how to compare drink nutrition labels at the store so they can choose healthier beverages that their kids will enjoy.
3. **Get acquainted.**



“What are you looking forward to learning in this session?” Write their responses on flip-chart paper and make an effort to cover as many of their questions as possible.

HANDS-ON COOKING AND DISCUSSION (45 MINUTES)

1. **Begin by having caregivers compare labels of popular beverages.**

***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, this is a good time to pull kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers have a discussion. If not, identify a specific cooking task for kids or give them a designated area for independent play.*



“What do you like to drink? What beverages did you buy this week for yourself and for your kids? Which of these drinks do you wish you or your kids drank less of? More of? Why?”

- Write down caregivers' examples. Remind caregivers that the main reason we drink beverages in terms of nutrition is to hydrate, or make sure our bodies get enough water. Kids need water for recharging after sports, activities, and play time. Often our beverages contain water, but they may also contain a lot of sugar. Sugary drinks can lead to a variety of health concerns like early tooth decay and cavities, and can lead to other health concerns, like diabetes or prediabetes, in the future.

ASK

"How can you tell which drinks have more sugar than others?"

- Point out that packaging and terms like "organic" or "natural" do not necessarily mean a drink is more nutritious. To check nutrition content, you have to look at the Nutrition Facts Label.
- Let caregivers share what they know about reading Nutrition Facts labels. As needed, review the Reading Food Labels Handout. Point out that a bottle or package of juice, soda, or flavored water often contains more than one serving per bottle. Show caregivers where the serving size and servings per container are listed at the top of the label. Point out where they can find the sugar content of the beverage.
- Have caregivers pair up to compare labels of various popular beverages, especially those typically offered to kids (e.g., juice, sports drinks, fruit-flavored "juices," flavored milks, etc.). If children are included, encourage caregivers to find ways to engage them in comparing labels. If they are able to identify colors or numbers, have caregivers ask kids to share what numbers they see and what colors they see on the package. If they are old enough to read, have the children support the caregivers in reading the labels and offering their ideas.



If time permits, you can add to the label reading activity by measuring the sugar to create a visual amount for each beverage. You can find the details to complete this in the Sugar Overload activity at the end of the lesson.



If time permits,

- Explain that sugar isn't always called 'sugar' in the ingredient lists. For example, we know soda is sweet, but the word 'sugar' isn't listed in the ingredients.
- Have caregivers find other names for sugars on the labels they are reading. Refer caregivers to the Cut Back on Added Sugar handout for a list of common sugars.

2. If children and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together to prepare a variety of healthy beverages.

- Have caregivers and children wash hands using proper technique.
- Introduce the recipes you have chosen and explain how the recipes are a flexible guide that they will use to make drinks in this activity.
- Draw attention to ways that drinks made at home can help you save money, be participatory for your children, help introduce new foods, or even serve as on-the-go meals, e.g. smoothies. There are a variety of beverages you can make at home with a few versatile ingredients commonly found in the WIC package.



Prep for Success: If appropriate for your group, have stations set up for different beverage options (e.g., smoothies, flavored water, and fruit soda). Break into groups and assign each group to a table. Rotate the groups through the stations, having each group create their own combination.

- While caregivers are working:



“What makes it challenging for you and/or your kids to drink water or other healthy beverages more often? Why do you choose to buy and drink sugary beverages?”

- Address 1-2 common challenges and let caregivers offer each other ideas to overcome those challenges. Use the following table to offer additional ideas as needed. Address other challenges as time permits.

HEALTHY BEVERAGE CHALLENGES	
Challenge	Talking Points
I'm short on time and money. Making my own drinks feels like one more thing to do and at least one more thing to buy.	<p>“These healthy options can be a good way to use WIC ingredients, like yogurt, juice, fruit, and peanut butter. And you might already have a lot of the ingredients on hand at home!”</p> <p>“If your kids already like smoothies or flavored water, making those options at home tends to be much less expensive than buying them pre-made.”</p> <p>“Make frozen ice cubes or a pitcher of water with fruit when you have extra time and then use it throughout the week.”</p>
It is expensive to buy water and my kids and I don't like how it tastes.	<p>“If you cannot use tap water, buying a water filter costs more up front but saves on bottled water. Buying big jugs of water is cheaper than buying individual bottles.”</p> <p>“Adding a little bit of frozen fruit or 100% fruit juice to water might be enough flavor for kids, or you, to like it. Let's see how you like the tastes of the drinks we make today!”</p>
My family's weeks are so busy and we need drinks on the go. Packaged ones are so convenient.	<p>“Water bottles and sippy cups can be found at low cost. Have a few filled with water in the fridge, in the car, or in your purse for easy grabbing.</p> <p>“Save the purchased drinks for when you really need the convenience. Only drink juice boxes and bottled water while on the go, not at home.”</p>
My kids are picky about their drinks and sometimes I just want to give them what they want for some peace and quiet.	<p>“You can use these drink recipes as a framework and choose ingredients that your kids like. Letting your kids actually choose the ingredients usually helps to get them excited about a healthier beverage option.”</p> <p>“Consider offering sugary beverages only as a dessert/sometimes food. This way your child can have positive associations with a favorite drink without having too much sugar day to day.”</p> <p>“It's not all or nothing! Eliminating a few sugary beverages, a week can go a long way toward helping kids develop healthier habits. Start small, think about some “easy wins,” and work your way up.”</p>

3. Allow kids and caregivers to taste the prepared recipes.

- Set out all the drinks that have been prepared by caregivers and any that you prepped in advance for tasting. As kids and caregivers taste the drinks,

ASK

“What ideas or tips have you used in your household to switch to lower sugar beverages?”

- Affirm caregiver responses and share additional tips as needed.
 - Reduce how much sugar you add to coffee, tea, or other drinks one packet at a time.
 - Ween kids off of high-sugar drinks. Mix water with juice or fruit-flavored juices. Over time, gradually increase the amount of water in the mixture.
 - Make sugar-sweetened beverages only for special occasions, like birthday parties or long road trips.
 - Be a good role model. If kids see you drinking and enjoying more water yourself, they’ll get the message that sugar-sweetened beverages are not “every day” drinks.
 - Make fun ice cubes with kids that have a little lemon or lime juice and some frozen berries. They look great and add interest to water.
 - Freeze water into popsicle molds (because even just a water ice pop is fun!)

CLOSING (5 MINUTES):

- **ENCOURAGE:** Encourage caregivers to choose one thing they learned today that they will commit to trying at home this week. Have them share aloud if they are willing.
- **ASK:** Model how to get buy-in from kids on healthy beverages by asking kids to share with their caregivers their favorite part of today’s session, the best drink they tried, and/or a new drink they want to try making at home.
- **TAKE:** Share handouts for caregivers to take home, as well as any incentive items you are providing. **Caregivers must complete the participant survey questions and return the forms to you before receiving their take-home items.**

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ACTIVITY

Sugar Overload

Estimated Time:

10 minutes

Materials:

- Empty cans or bottles of a variety of popular sugary drinks
- Clear plastic cups, one for each empty can or bottle
- Bag of sugar
- Teaspoon
- Calculator
- Flip-chart paper or poster board

Handouts:

- Drink to Your Health, page 14

In Advance

1. Collect a variety of empty containers for popular sugary drinks (e.g., sodas, fruit-flavored drinks, sweet tea, vitamin water, chocolate milk, sports drinks).
2. Set out the empty bottles for the drinks.
3. Write the following on a piece of flip-chart paper:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Grams of sugar} \\ \text{in one serving} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{r} \text{Number} \\ \text{of servings} \end{array} = \begin{array}{r} \text{Grams of sugar} \\ \text{in total package} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Grams of sugar} \\ \text{in total package} \end{array} \div 4 = \begin{array}{r} \text{Teaspoons of} \\ \text{sugar} \end{array}$$

With Parents

1. Set out the bottles of commonly consumed drinks. **ASK:** How would you decide which of these drinks is healthier? As needed, remind parents that we can use the Nutrition Facts panel to compare food and drink choices. Explain that many popular drinks are loaded with sugar, so we want to pay particular attention to sugar on the label.
2. Ask a few parents to volunteer to come to the front. Assign them an empty beverage container, if possible based on what they say they drink most often. Ask them to read out the amount of sugar in one serving of their beverage.
3. Have parents use the serving size information to figure out the grams of sugar in the entire container. Use the calculator to determine the equivalent teaspoons of sugar.
4. Ask parents to scoop the teaspoons of sugar calculated for their drinks into an empty plastic cup. Have them place the cup in front of the corresponding empty beverage container.
5. Compare the results and discuss impressions. Summarize that many popular beverages are very high in sugar and take the place of other drinks that are better for our bodies. Discuss why it's better to offer kids mostly water and low-fat milk, smaller amounts of 100% juice, and very few sodas or other sugary drinks. Use the points on the **Drink to Your Health handout** as needed.



Be prepared to help parents with the math to move things along. It's a good idea to have the correct amounts calculated in advance. If you're running short on time, do just one calculation with the group. Then have parents measure out the amount of sugar that has already been calculated for their drinks.

A C T I V I T Y

Healthy Drinks Taste Test

Estimated Time:
10 minutes

Materials:

- Small disposable cups
- Materials and ingredients for preparing beverages chosen from the table to the right

In Advance

1. Set up stations for parents to make and taste a variety of healthy drinks, using ideas in the table below.
2. Make sure each station has the appropriate equipment to create and serve the drink for that station.

Beverage	Ingredients	How to Prepare
Fruit smoothies	See Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies (page 84).	
Flavored water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lemons, limes, oranges, and cucumbers • Fresh mint leaves, rosemary, or other fresh herbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rinse and slice fresh lemons, limes, oranges, and cucumbers. • Snip mint leaves, rosemary, or other fresh herbs. • Fill several pitchers with ice water and add any combination of ingredients to each pitcher.
Fruit-juice sodas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seltzer • Variety of 100% juices • Lime • Optional: Lemon, lime, or orange slices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill a large pitcher, ½ juice and ½ seltzer water. • Rinse the lime and cut in half. Squeeze the juice from each half into the pitcher. • Mix well and add ice before serving. Add fruit slices, if using.

With Parents

1. Explain how each drink is prepared. Divide parents into small groups. Assign each group to a starting station.
2. Have each group work on preparing the drink at their station, making enough for the other groups to sample.
3. When parents are finished preparing their drinks, invite them to move to the next station and taste the healthy drink the previous group made. Have the station leader briefly describe how it was made. Repeat until parents have visited each station.
4. When everyone is finished sampling, engage parents in discussion. **ASK:** Which drinks did you enjoy the most? Would you try making any at home? Which ones?
5. Remind parents that tap water is free, safe, has no calories, and helps us replace fluids lost throughout the day. It's a great low-cost, anytime drink and can be jazzed up with minimal expense as we saw in the activity.



If time permits, have each group practice making the drink at each station, rather than just sampling the drinks the other groups have already prepared.