

Liquid Waistline

By John Fairchild

What you drink may be a primary indicator of what you carry around your waist.

A new analysis entitled "What America Drinks" suggests that beverage choices could play a key role against Americans' battle of the ever-increasing bulge. "What America Drinks" found that Americans consume about 500 beverage calories per day. Calories from sweetened beverages, such as soda, fruit flavored drinks, alcohol, pre-sweetened iced teas and sport/energy drinks can account for one-quarter of your total calories per day.

A regular glass of wine, for example, carries approximately 120 calories. Sport drinks and sodas hold 200 calories, pub beers also hold about 200 calories and hard liquor has about 70 calories per ounce, which equates to the size of a small shot glass. These liquid calories do not provide the vital nutrients that aid healthier bodies.

Most of you may not compensate for drinking your calories by eating less. Because most liquid calories typically do not satisfy our hunger, you may continue to eat your normal portion size. The report suggests that most adults drank soda or another calorie rich beverage more often than a healthier milk product. It also suggests that Americans who drank more milk and fewer nutrient-poor beverages tended to weigh less than those who drank milk regardless of overall calorie intake.

The study suggests that milk contributes substantially to the diet by supplying essential nutrients while other types of sweetened beverages only supply added sugars and calories with very few nutrients. Results showed that participants who drank milk instead of sweetened beverages had a lower body mass index and enhanced their intake of calcium, vitamin A, magnesium and potassium. The report seems to suggest that by drinking milk

participants were more satiated and were able to manage their weight better. This suggests that having a higher intake of sweetened beverages over milk products may be linked to increased weight due to factors other than an increase in caloric intake. Many other studies are in the process on how an increase in calcium rich foods may aid better weight management.

Another independent study found that when a calorie-laden beverage was consumed with a meal there was not a reduction in total food volume intake. The beverage calories then added to the calories from food, which resulted in a larger total caloric meal.

This finding underlines many studies on portion size awareness. The more food that is placed in front of us the more is consumed. Subjects from this study reported that they did not feel fuller by adding caloric beverages to a meal. Subjects also reported that the more beverages they were served the more they drank. The psychology of these various studies seem to be redundant--the larger the plate or glass the more you consume. Think small to help control your waistline.

Side note: According to the American Beverage Association, the average American consumes over a gallon of soft drinks per day (there are many liquids that are classified as a soft drink other than soda).

One example: 7-Eleven's bestseller, the Double Big Gulp, contains a whopping 800 calories.

LISTED BELOW ARE SOME TOOLS TO HELP YOU FIGHT THE BULGE.

	INSTEAD OF...	TRY...
COFFEE	Starbucks regular cappuccino (400)	Dunkin Coffee w/skim and Splenda (40) (Avoid creams, sugars and whipped toppings)
ALCOHOL	Long Island Iced Tea (230) <i>(Stay hydrated and watch % of alcohol, i.e. Ethanol) * 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine and 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor contain the same amount of ethanol. All have the same potential for intoxication. Remember when you deal with liquor it is mixed with other liquids (fruit juice, tonics, sugar) that add calories.</i>	Beck's Light (64) (Limit alcohol consumption)
JUICE	Nestea (180)	Fruit H2O (0) (Use non-sweetened teas and seltzers. Watch sugar content. Try fresh lemon, lime or 100% fruit juice in water)
ENERGY DRINK	Gatorade (200)	Propel (25) (Check label for calories per bottle)
DAIRY	Whole Milk	1% or skim

Remember, saving just 100 calories per day can help you meet your weight loss goals.

Compare your favorite sweetened beverage to low fat milk by visiting this interactive site:

http://thinkaboutyourdrink.com/weighing_bb.php

Visit these sites for great resources on health and wellness:

www.weightlosscoaching.org, www.ific.org, www.eatright.org,
www.americanheart.org, www.nih.gov, <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov>

A Graduate of Cedar Crest College in Nutrition, John is also a Certified Trainer with the National Academy of Sports Medicine and was the Director of Fitness at several fitness centers on the east coast. He



holds a Fitness Expert Certification and has produced and recorded various exercise videos (originator of Kickaerobox) and DVD's. His special interest is in nutritional counseling where he holds an Adult Weight Management Counselor certification with the American Dietetic Association. You previously just saw him as one of the trainers on the Dr. Phil Weight Loss Challenge on NBC and on Entertainment Tonight. Contact him at jfairchild@phillyfitmagazine.com.