

# DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS 2015-2020 EIGHTH EDITION

***Shift to reduce added sugars consumption to less than 10 percent of calories per day:***<sup>[4]</sup>

Individuals have many potential options for reducing the intake of added sugars. Strategies include choosing beverages with no added sugars, such as water, in place of sugar-sweetened beverages, reducing portions of sugar-sweetened beverages, drinking these beverages less often, and selecting beverages low in added sugars. Low-fat or fat-free milk or 100% fruit or vegetable juice also can be consumed within recommended amounts in place of sugar-sweetened beverages. Additional

# Beverages

Beverages are not always remembered or considered when individuals think about overall food intake. However, they are an important component of eating patterns. In addition to water, the beverages that are most commonly consumed include sugar-sweetened beverages, milk and flavored milk, alcoholic beverages, fruit and vegetable juices, and coffee and tea. Beverages vary in their nutrient and calorie content. Some, like water, do not contain any calories. Some, like soft drinks, contain calories but little nutritional value. Finally, some, like milk and fruit and vegetable juices, contain important nutrients such as calcium, potassium, and vitamin D, in addition to calories.

Beverages make a substantial contribution to total water needs as well as to nutrient and calorie intakes in most typical eating patterns. In fact, they account for almost 20 percent of total calorie intake. Within beverages, the largest source of calories is sweetened beverages, accounting for 35 percent of calories from beverages. Other major sources of calories from beverages are milk and milk drinks, alcoholic beverages, fruit and vegetable juices, and coffee and tea.

When choosing beverages, both the calories and nutrients they may provide are important considerations. Beverages that are calorie-free—especially water—or that contribute beneficial nutrients, such as fat-free and low-fat milk and 100% juice, should be the primary beverages consumed. Milk and 100% fruit juice should be consumed within recommended food group amounts and calorie limits. Sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks that are less than 100% juice, can contribute excess calories while providing few or no key nutrients. If they are consumed, amounts should be within overall calorie limits and limits for calories from added sugars (see [Chapter 1](#)). The use of high-intensity sweeteners, such as those used in “diet” beverages,