

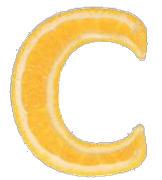
Common Sugary Drink Myths Explained

Myth: Fruit drinks are healthy (or at least healthier than soda).

Fruit drinks have little or no actual fruit juice in them. Many fruit drinks are mostly added sugar and water, and they often contain diet sweeteners like those found in diet soda. Experts agree that young children should avoid consuming [diet sweeteners](#). While many fruit drinks contain some vitamins, the amount of sugar in them, along with the diet sweeteners, keep fruit drinks from being considered a “healthy” beverage.

Myth: Children need fruit drinks to get enough vitamin C.

Children can get vitamin C from a variety of whole food sources such as cantaloupe, oranges, kiwi, broccoli, and red and green bell peppers. Children should eat foods high in vitamin C regularly. While fruit drinks can be easily fortified with vitamins, these drinks provide a significant amount of added sugar and often contain diet sweeteners, and are not an optimal way to get vitamin C.



Myth: Some caffeine is ok for children and teens.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommends that children under the age of 18 avoid caffeine-containing beverages. Regular soda typically contains 30-50 milligrams of caffeine and energy drinks are especially worrisome as they can contain up to 160 milligrams, as well as other stimulants. Caffeine has been linked to a number of harmful effects in children and adolescents, therefore it is not considered appropriate for young people to consume.

Myth: Children need sports drinks after physical activity.

Water typically provides enough hydration and is the best choice after physical activity, even for active children. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), in most cases, there is no need for children to drink sports drinks. Sports drinks contain added sugar, and frequent consumption can increase risk of weight gain and obesity, as well as dental decay. There is no reason for kids to drink sports drinks unless a health professional specifically recommends that they do so.



Myth: Drinks labeled “natural” are healthy.

The Food and Drug Administration has not defined the term “natural,” but allows its use if a food does not contain added color, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances. This means that many natural ingredients originated from a recognizable food but many have undergone chemical and physical processes to drastically change the ingredient. Many drinks containing the word “natural” contain ingredients manufactured in a lab and may contain a considerable amount of empty calories, making it an unhealthy choice.