

Community Nutrition

A community driven approach to reduce sugary drink consumption and promote healthier beverages, including tap water.

Healthy Beverages



Healthy Foods



Healthy Beverages

Overview

Healthy Beverages is a component of the Healthy Living Community Nutrition Program. It is a community-driven approach focused on reducing sugary drink consumption and promoting healthier beverages consumption, including tap water.

Promoting consumption of tap water and non-sugary drinks to improve community health

The largest source of added sugars in the American diet comes from sugary drinks. Examples of sugary beverages include regular soda, fruit flavored drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and coffee/tea beverages with added sugars.

There is robust evidence linking drinking sugary drinks with negative health consequences such as excessive weight gain, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and tooth decay.

Sugary drinks consumption is higher among low income, Black and Latino children and teens, and this disproportion contributes to concerning health disparities for people of color. The beverage industry spends over \$1 billion annually marketing sugar sweetened beverages and continues to disproportionately target Black and Latino children and teens with their marketing campaigns.

The Healthy Living Initiative is committed to increasing awareness of the health risks associated with the consumption of sugary drinks, and pursuing collaborations to create policies and environments that make it easier for everyone in Minneapolis to make healthier beverage choices.



Our current focus

To tackle health issues like diabetes, and cardiovascular disease associated with the consumption of sugary drinks, the Healthy Beverages initiative focuses on:

Increasing the appeal, availability, and affordability of healthy beverages, especially tap water.

Decreasing the appeal, availability, and affordability of sugary drinks.

Collaboration and partnerships

Cultivating multisector collaboration and support for sugary drink reduction strategies is critical to achieving successful and sustained change to reduce the complications associated with consumption of sugary drinks, especially among the most vulnerable populations in Minneapolis.

By cultivating these partnerships and working together, we become agents of change. For example:

- In 2015, the Healthy Living Initiative (HLI) team and over forty community organizations partnered to create a campaign called *ReThink Your Drink, Every Sip Counts!* The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the harmful health effects of consuming sugary drinks while creating healthier beverage environments.

- A work team and advisory committee was established and named the *ReThink your Drink* Leadership Team. The team aligned the strengths of seven partners into a collective effort for improved community health.

- In 2019, the *ReThink your Drink* Leadership Team led a project called *Water Magic*. The goal of the project was to explore perceptions of tap water safety among youth and communities of color in Minneapolis.

Through a comprehensive community outreach plan the team collected more than 1000 insights from community members. The findings from this activation showed that distrust was a critical factor that led many people to purchase bottled water or sugary drinks instead of drinking tap water.



Driving sustainable changes together

The Healthy Beverage program and its community partners work in collaboration to improve policies, systems, and physical environments to reduce unhealthy beverage options and substantially increase consumption of healthier options. For example:

- **Policy:** More than 25 organizations adopted healthy beverage policies and participated in the *ReThink Your Drink* Campaign. The adopted policies helped guide the choice of beverages served at events, programs and organizational meetings.

- **Environments:** Little Earth, a member of the *ReThink Your Drink* Leadership Team, complemented their healthy beverage policy by installing a hydration station in its youth recreation center. They distributed free reusable water bottles to all youth along with educational information about the health, environmental, and financial benefits of water.

Success story - Making a difference together: Tap Water Ambassador program

Minneapolis tap water has been ranked among the top municipal water supplies in the country. In 2022, the HLI partnered with five community organizations, Public Works, and the University of Minnesota to pilot the Tap Water Ambassador (TWA) program which focused on:

- Raising awareness about the safety, quality, and benefits of tap water; and
- Increasing trust in and consumption of tap water among American Indian, African American, and Latino communities in Minneapolis.

The TWA program trained community members to serve as trusted messengers in these priority communities. The initial cohort of 40 Ambassadors included youth and adults from five community organizations: Appetite for Change, the Cultural Wellness Center, Little Earth Residents Association, Neighborhood Hub and St. Mary's Health Clinics.



The Ambassadors conducted more than 130 outreach activities, reaching over 4,500 people, primarily from cultural communities in Minneapolis.

The program reported:

- Improved confidence in the safety and quality of Minneapolis tap water; and
- Increased intention to drink more tap water.

Future goals of the TWA program include increasing the number of Ambassadors, reaching more cultural communities (Hmong, East African, etc.), and expanding the network of partners.



High consumption of added sugars significantly contributes towards weight gain and developing chronic diseases including diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

People who consume sugary drinks regularly – 1 to 2 cans a day or more – have a **26% greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes** than people who rarely have such drinks.¹



3 in 5 Americans aged 2 years and older exceed the recommendation to consume less than 10% of their total daily calories from added sugars on a given day.²



About 10 packets of sugar are in **one** 12oz can of soda or **39 grams of sugar**.³

In Minneapolis, over 25% of American Indians, 13% of Blacks, 5% of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Latinos, and 16% of youth said they choose sugary drinks over healthier options whenever they're thirsty.⁴

Community leaders and organizations should support efforts to reduce sugary drink consumption to improve community health.

The health benefits of drinking water



Increases body hydration



Improves your brain function & mood



Protects and lubricates your joints



Keeps your heart healthy



Reduces the risk of diabetes



Boosts your metabolic rate



Delivers oxygen to your body



Helps maintain healthy blood pressure



Keeps your digestive system healthy



Helps prevent the recurrence of kidney stones



Helps prevent premature wrinkling



Reduces tooth decay & helps keep your mouth clean

... helps people live longer healthier lives.

Sources

1. *Sugary Drinks*. (2023, August). [Academic]. Harvard. Chan School of Public Health. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/sugary-drinks/>
2. *Be Sugar Smart: Limiting Added Sugars Can Improve Health*. (n.d.). [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/be-sugar-smart.html>.
3. *How Much Sugar is in Coca-Cola?* (n.d.). [Corporate]. The Coca-Cola Company. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/about-us/faq/how-much-sugar-is-in-coca-cola>
4. Minneapolis Water Magic community surveys, 2019 (Internal data).

Going forward

Decreasing sugary drinks consumption, particularly in the communities that are unfairly targeted by the beverage industry is a complex uphill challenge. The HLI and its partners will continue working together at the intersection of health, justice, and equity to address complex issues like health risks linked to sugary drinks consumption.



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We invite you to join us in our efforts
to create healthier communities
together in Minneapolis.



Building Healthier
Communities



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