



Drinking Water Should be Tax-Free

Tap water is by far the cheapest, safest, and most accessible alternative to sugary drinks that hurt our health. For many families, though, bottled water is their main source of drinking water. In all its forms, whether from the tap, the fountain, or a bottle, water should be highly accessible, affordable, and tax-free.

Maryland is one of only four states that taxes bottled water at a higher rate than other essential groceries, such as milk and bread. Our tax code should not discourage water consumption. It is essential to life.

Why is drinking water important to our health?

- At birth, babies are made up of 75% water. By the time we die, most adults are only 50% water. Water is important to the proper functioning of our bodies and every organ system within (The Universe Within: the Deep History of the Human Body, 2013).
- Water is the only liquid nutrient that is essential for your body's hydration. All cells and organs need water to function in the human body (CDC, 2011)
- The Institute of Medicine recommends that an adequate intake of water for men is roughly about 15 cups of total beverages a day, and about 11 cups for women. Lack of water can lead to dehydration, decreased energy levels, poor physical coordination, and impaired mental performance (United States Department of Agriculture, 2014).
- Water is a healthier alternative to sugary drinks. The Institute of Medicine attributes 20% of the nation's weight increase between 1977 and 2007 to consumption of sugary drinks, including regular soda, sugar-added juices, flavored waters and teas, sports drinks, and energy drinks (Institute of Medicine, 2012).
- Drinking just one 8-oz sugary drink per day increases a child's odds of becoming obese by 60% (Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, 2012).
- Sugary drinks contribute more calories and added sugars to our diets than any other food or beverage and daily consumption is strongly linked to higher childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes rates (Institute of Medicine, 2012).



More Reasons Why Water is a Healthy Choice

- In addition to hydrating the body, water also flushes toxins out of vital organs, carries nutrients to your cells, protects body organs and tissues, helps prevent constipation, lubricates joints, regulates body temperature and provides a moist environment for ear, nose, and throat tissues (CDC, 2012).
- Studies in healthy adults show that even mild dehydration impairs a number of important aspects of cognitive function such as concentration, alertness, and short-term memory (Nutrition Reviews, 2005).

Studies: How Drinking More Water Can Help Reverse the Twin Epidemics of Childhood Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes

- Only 72% of high school students nationwide drank a serving of water daily (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2010).
- Sugary drink intake is associated with long-term change in body fat in children, and replacing sugary drinks with water or milk is inversely associated with body fat development (Nutrition Journal, 2014).
- Replacing all sugary drinks with drinking water was associated with a predicted mean decrease in total energy of 200 calories/day over 12 months. The results suggest that replacing sugary drinks with drinking water can help lower total calories in overweight consumers (Obesity, 2007).
- A prospective study of 82,900 women (Nurses Health Study II) estimated that the replacement of one serving of sugary drinks and fruit juices per day by one cup of plain water per day was associated with a 7% (modest) lower risk of type 2 diabetes (American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2007).
- A study of Lower Mississippi Delta adults concluded that replacing sugary drinks with water could substantially improve the diet quality of the population and potentially lead to significant weight loss over time. Prioritizing intervention efforts to focus on the replacement of sugary drinks with water may be the most efficacious approach for conveying potentially substantial health benefits in this and similar disadvantaged populations (Food Nutrition Review, 2011).
- Water consumed before a meal has been found to reduce caloric intake among non-obese older adults. In a small study of overweight and obese older adults, meal caloric intake was significantly less (by 13%) when subjects had water before the meal, compared to when they had no water prior to the meal (Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2008).

Want healthy kids? Join with Sugar Free Kids Maryland to make a difference. Join us at www.sugarfreekidsmd.org. Call Robi Rawl at (410) 274-2156 or email her at rrawl@medchi.org if you have any questions.