



# Share the Wellness Tip

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## Are You Drinking Your Calories?

Over the past few decades, the amount of calories consumed has increased in the United States. But not all those calories are from bigger portions or our plates. Researchers found that caloric intake from drinks had increased from an average of 236 calories per day to 458 calories each day. Soda, alcohol, and fruit drinks were the main source of the extra calories. And these excess calories from drinks may be adding to rising obesity rates.

Think about your daily intake, a coffee drink with milk and sugary syrup can easily add up to 240 calories, now down a smoothie and you're reaching another 300 calories or more. Have a few drinks at a party? Two glasses of vodka and soda approaches 600 calories, not to mention to sugar intake. This adds up to a lot of calories without the benefits of a meal.

How can you avoid hidden calories? Take a look at the calorie and sugar content of food and beverages either on food labels, in restaurants or online before you take a sip. Try these trades:

- Substitute skim milk for whole milk and you can save 65 calories.
- Add 4 ounces of water to your 4 ounces of fruit juice and save 50 calories.
- Switch to a sugar-free packet to add to your 2% milk for hot chocolate and you can save 60 calories.
- Hold the whipped cream on any beverage and save 50 calories.
- Replace a cup of whole milk with a cup of vanilla soymilk to save 50 calories.
- Choose light beer over dark beer for 50 calories saved.

For more information and resources on nutrition and dietary guidelines visit the health and wellness section of the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas website](#).

Sources: *Journal of Obesity*, 2012, *USA Today College*, September 22nd 2012, *Reader's Digest*

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