

ReThink Your Drink!

By Sophia Lassotovitch, Healthy Start Teen Staff

Hello my name is Sophia Lassotovitch and I recently got hired to work for Laytonville Healthy Start as a Peer Nutrition Educator under a grant funded by the Network for a Healthy California. You may have seen my co-workers, Hannah Dale, Sidney Tucker, Hanani Ikeh, and I working at the Laytonville Healthy Start Community Fair at our ReThink Your Drink booth. Our booth presented interesting information and facts about the negative effects of sweetened beverages. Our goal was to show how much sugar you are drinking on a daily basis and to give you tips and information about drinks that are healthier for you.

I also worked at the Healthy Start Summer Program. During the program we painted and colored pictures of fruits and vegetables with local kids ranging from 4 to 10 years of age. We had the pictures on display at the Healthy Start Fair behind our smoothie bike. Our goal was to encourage kids to eat more fruits and vegetables. One way that we encouraged that was our smoothie bike. If you haven't heard, a smoothie bike is a stationary bicycle with a blender attached to the front. When you pedal, you power the blender. Healthy Start helped to purchase the bike along with several other Family Resource Centers in the county for North Coast Opportunities. You may remember that earlier in the spring some community members ran in the Human Race as a part of the North Coast Opportunities team – this is the smoothie bike that they were raising money to buy! Everyone who saw it in action loved it, and we had fun promoting healthy drinks and exercise while riding it and handing out smoothies.

Since I started this nutrition job I have learned an abundant amount of interesting facts. Some of the facts that really caught my attention were the recommended amounts of sugar. The recommended amount of added sugar a man should have daily is nine teaspoons, a women five teaspoons, and for a child it's only three teaspoons. There are twenty-seven teaspoons of sugar in a one liter bottle of Dr. Pepper! That is over three times the amount of teaspoons of sugar you are supposed to have in one day. Research has shown that drinking just one more can of soda a day can increase weight gain of 10 pounds per year, so reducing soda intake can mean serious weight loss.

If you are interested in learning about how to find out how many teaspoons are in your drink here are the steps to do it. First you have to find the grams (g) of sugar per serving. To do this you look for "sugars" on the Nutrition Facts. On my Dr. Pepper bottle there are 27 grams of sugars. You take the amount of grams of sugar and multiply that by the number of servings in the container (it says this at the top of the Nutrition Facts). On my Dr. Pepper bottle it say four servings. Then, you multiply the grams of sugar per servings by the number of servings per container to get the total number of grams in the container. In the case of my one-liter of Dr. Pepper that means twenty-seven grams of sugars times four servings for a total of 108 grams of sugar. Once you get the total you divide that number by four. That equals the amount of teaspoons of sugar in your bottle. In my Dr.

Pepper bottle my total comes out to be twenty-seven teaspoons of sugar! That's the same as nine tablespoons, and more than a half cup!

The best thing for you to drink is water; it contains no calories after all! Water helps you lose weight, aids in digestion and your skin loves it! It's also the best hydrator out there. Here's a good way to make water a little more interesting-make infused water. Infused water is water with slices of fruits, vegetables and herbs; that way they add flavor but with no sweeteners. To do this, add slices of lemon, orange, lime, cucumber, strawberries or melon to your water. Try adding a few sprigs of fresh mint, basil, cilantro or lavender. Keep a pitcher of this water in the fridge all the time and drink that when you're thirsty. Another good option is unsweetened iced tea, especially herbal tea because it doesn't have caffeine and won't dehydrate you or keep you up at night.

If you are interested in finding out more about ReThinking Your Drink, keep an eye out for us at the Laytonville Farmer's Market (at the Good Food Store on Mondays from 2:30 – 5:30) or around town. For more information stop by Healthy Start, or call us at 984-8089. Thank you!