

# THIRSTY? THINK ABOUT YOUR DRINK!

## Topic: Soda and sweetened beverages

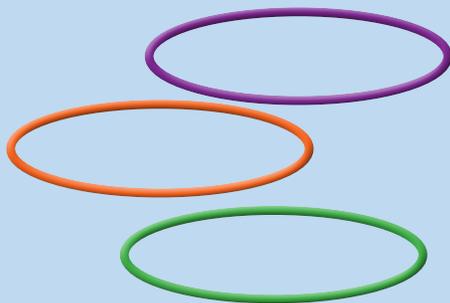
*In this activity, students will learn the importance of limiting intake of sweetened and high-calorie beverages and choosing more health-promoting drinks, such as water and low-fat or fat-free milk. This game is a fun variation of “Musical Chairs,” with this twist: no player is eliminated, because staying active throughout the game better promotes heart health.*

### Materials:

Hula-Hoop toys or carpet squares (1 per pair of students)  
upbeat music and player, whistle, or other signal  
whiteboard or chart paper (optional)

### Setup:

Scatter hoops randomly across the gym.



### NOTE!

To demonstrate and apply the concepts behind this lesson, encourage students to drink plenty of water before, during, and after this game.

## STEPS:

1. With students, brainstorm a list of sweetened drinks (for example, soda, chocolate milk, and sports drinks). Record the list on the whiteboard or chart paper (optional). Then brainstorm a list of health-promoting drinks (e.g., skim or 1% white milk; water; no-sugar-added 100% fruit juices in moderation). Record these on your list (optional).
2. Ask students to describe how sweetened drinks might be detrimental to their health (for example, extra sugar and calories can cause weight gain; soda has a lot of calories but no nutrients; sugary drinks can promote tooth decay and cavities; soda contains added chemicals). Then ask students to describe how health-promoting drinks enhance their health (for example, the calcium in milk promotes bone, tooth, and muscle strength; water keeps the body functioning at its best; 100% fruit juices can be high in vitamin C).



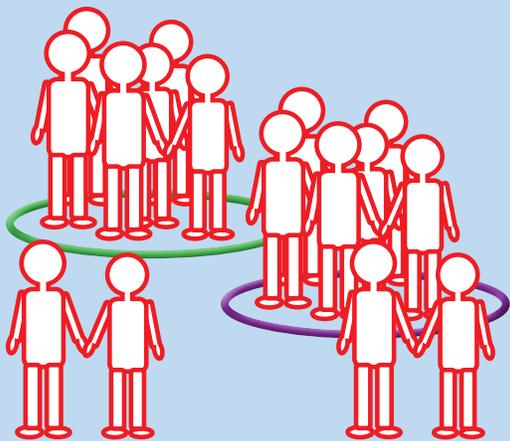
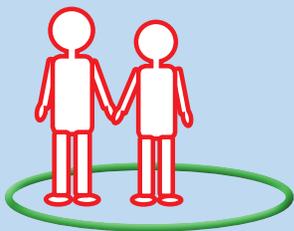
Sweetened Drinks

Health-Promoting Drinks



3. Continue by explaining, “Some drinks may seem healthy, but they can cause problems. For example, diet soda doesn’t have any calories, but it doesn’t have nutrients, either. Chocolate milk has calcium and protein, but it also has a lot of unnecessary calories. The calories in 100% fruit juices can add up quickly to unwanted weight gain and may lack the important fiber found in whole fruits. Energy drinks and sports drinks can have a lot of sugar and chemicals that your body doesn’t need.” Water is always a great option when you’re thirsty because it’s refreshing and doesn’t have calories.
4. Say, “In this game, we will show how your recommended daily calorie allowance can fill up with unhealthy drink choices so that there is not enough room for healthier options—that is, calories from healthier drinks and other healthy foods.”

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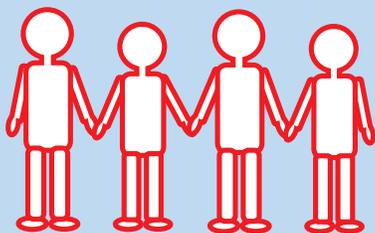
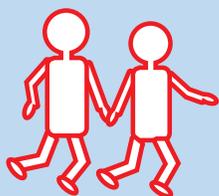


5. Explain that as the music plays, partners will hold each other by one hand and move about the play area, being careful to stay outside the hoops. Call out the way they should move as partners (skip, jog, hop, walk) and then start the music. When the music stops, each pair finds a hoop to stand in; with each round, you will remove one hoop. This means pairs will need to share hoops with other pairs. Caution students to avoid colliding with others throughout this activity but to keep moving while the music is playing.
6. Continue the game, each round calling out a different way of moving and removing one more hoop. End the game when students are having trouble fitting into the remaining hoops.
7. Gather students back into a discussion group. Remind them that each hoop represented the recommended daily calorie allowance. Then ask the students what happened as the hoops were removed and more students had to fit into a hoop. (It got more difficult to get everyone in.) Next, ask what the students represented (both healthy and unhealthy drink choices). Ask, “At the end of the game, was there room for healthy drink choices to fit in the daily limit?” (No, the space was all used up.) “How can you make room in your total calorie intake to make sure healthy drink and food choices always fit in?” (Don’t use up calories with unhealthy drink choices.) Then review what some of those healthy drink choices are. Remind students that it is important to stay hydrated throughout the day—especially when playing and exercising or when it’s hot outside—and that there’s always room for water in a daily calorie allowance because it doesn’t add calories. Encourage students to recall the game the next time they’re choosing a beverage and to think about the importance of not using up calories on sugary drinks.

Daily  
Recommended  
Calorie  
Allowance

8. As you finish, invite students to get a drink of water, reminding them that water has no calories and helps keep the body functioning well.

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## FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS:

- Direct students to move about the play space with easier locomotor movements, such as walking, jogging, and hopping on both feet.
- If a student is struggling to perform a locomotor movement, hold his or her hand and perform the movement alongside him or her (or have another student do so).
- Stop the game before the hoops get as crowded.

## FOR OLDER STUDENTS:

- Direct students to move about the play space with more challenging locomotor movements, such as hopping on one foot and crab-walking while staying with their partners.
- Continue the game even though students must stand on one foot or tiptoes to fit into the remaining hoops.
- About midway through the game, direct each pair to join another pair to create groups of four that must navigate the play space and fit into hoops.
- Older students may prefer to play without holding hands. As an alternative, have them hold onto exercise bands or jump ropes.
- In addition to the hoops, use other items of varying sizes, such as carpet squares and vinyl spots. Reinforce the idea that different people need different amounts of calories each day; all students of the same age won't necessarily need the same amount of food each day. Because of that, one sugary beverage might make up a larger percentage of a particular child's diet.