

CHOOSING HEALTHIER BEVERAGES

After reading about nutrition in your text and completing the dietary assessment labs, you can probably identify several changes you could make to improve your diet. This behavior change plan focus on choosing healthy beverages to increase intake of nutrients and decrease intake of empty calories from added sugars and fat.

Getting Ready for Change: A Cost-Benefit Analysis

Do you feel ready and committed to change your behavior? Although your primary surface reason for developing and implementing a behavior change project may be to get a good grade in your wellness course, you're more likely to be successful both now and in the long term if you believe that the benefits of changing outweigh the costs. As an initial step in your program, complete an analysis of the benefits and costs of change for you using the [Behavior Change Cost-Benefit Analysis worksheet](#). Use your analysis to create a list of your major reasons for behavior change—and then post your list in a prominent location.

In your analysis, include the short-term and long-term costs and benefits of both your current behavior and your new behavior. For example, your current beverage choices may be tasty and convenient but may also increase your risk of becoming overweight or developing heart disease or osteoporosis. Remember, your beverage choices affect wellness in terms of both the energy and nutrient content of the beverages you consume and the other possible ways you might have “spent” your beverage calories. For example, trading in one regular soda a day for a glass of water might free up 150 calories that you could put toward increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables. Also consider physical and emotional effects on yourself and others. For example, would a healthier diet support your self-image or personal values? Is health important to you, and is your current lifestyle supporting that value? Are your eating habits influencing others? For example, what if you discovered that your roommate never drank regular soda until she or he started living with you? Include as much detail as possible in your analysis.

Gather Data and Establish a Baseline

Once you are ready to change, begin by tracking your beverage consumption for one to two weeks. Keep a record of the types and amounts of beverage you drink, including water. Also note where you were at the time and whether you obtained the beverage on-site or brought it with you. Use the [Pre-Program Beverage Log](#) or create your own journal or log page.

At the same time, investigate your options. Find out what other beverages you can easily obtain over the course of your daily routine. For example, what drinks are available in the dining hall where you eat lunch or at the student union where you often grab snacks? How many drinking fountains do you walk by over the course of the day? What beverages are available at your favorite fast-food restaurant? This information will help you put together a successful plan for change.

Analyze Your Data

Evaluate your beverage consumption by examining your daily beverage logs and dividing your typical daily consumption between healthy and less healthy choices. Use the following guide as a basis, and add other beverages to the lists as needed.

Choose less often:

- Regular soda
- Sweetened bottled iced tea
- Fruit beverages made with little fruit juice (usually labeled fruit drinks, punches, beverages, blends, or ades)
- Whole milk

Choose more often:

- Water—plain, mineral, and sparkling
- Low-fat or nonfat milk
- Fruit juice (100% juice)
- Unsweetened herbal tea

If you need additional information about particular beverages to flesh out your lists, you can obtain the calorie and fat content from food labels and online. Be sure to check the serving size listed on food labels because many beverage containers contain several servings. A good resource for beverages that do not have food labels is the searchable USDA Nutrient Database (http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut_search.pl).

Set Goals

How many beverages do you consume daily from each category? What would be a healthy and realistic goal for change? For example, if your beverage consumption is currently evenly divided between the “choose more often” and “choose less often” categories (four from each list), you might set a final goal for your behavior change program of increasing your healthy choices by two (six from the “more often” list and two from the “less often” list).

Develop an overall goal and some intermediate goals for your program. In the example given above, an intermediate goal might be five beverages from the “more often” list and three from the “less often” list. Your goals will be important for tracking your program’s progress, so you’ll record them in your behavior change contract (see below).

Develop Strategies and a Plan for Change

Once you’ve set your goal, you need to develop strategies that will help you choose healthy beverages more often. Consider the following possible changes to your behavior and your environment.

- Keep healthy beverages on hand; if you live in a student dorm, rent a small refrigerator or keep juice, nonfat milk, and other healthy choices in the dorm’s kitchen refrigerator.
- Plan ahead, and put a bottle of water or 100% fruit juice in your backpack every day.
- Check food labels on beverages for serving sizes, calories and nutrients; comparison shop to find the healthiest choices, and watch your serving sizes. Use this information to make your “choose more often” list longer and more specific to your own personal preferences.
- If you eat out frequently, examine all the beverages available at the places you typically eat your meals. You’ll probably find that healthy choices are available; if not, bring along your own drink or find somewhere else to eat.
- For snacks, try water and a piece of fruit rather than a heavily sweetened beverage.
- Create healthy beverages that appeal to you; for example, try adding slices of citrus fruit to water or mixing 100% fruit juice with sparkling water.

Adopt some of these strategies and develop some of your own. You may also need to make changes in your routine to decrease the likelihood that you’ll make unhealthy choices. For example, you might discover from your beverage logs that you always buy a soda after class when you pass a particular vending machine. If this is the case, try another route that allows you to avoid the machine. Or you may find that you frequently have a milkshake when you study with a particular friend. In this case, you may need to involve your friend in your program by asking her or him to support you in your efforts to change. And try to guard against impulse buying by carrying water or a healthy snack with you every day.

As a final planning step, develop some rewards for your program—for achieving intermediate and final goals as well as for just sticking with your program. Make a list of your activities and favorite events to use as rewards. They should be special, inexpensive, and preferably unrelated to food or alcohol. You might treat yourself to a concert, a ball game, a new CD, a long-distance phone call to a friend, a day off from studying for a hike in the woods—whatever is meaningful to you. List your rewards on your behavior change contract.

Complete a Contract

The last step before you put your program into action is to make a formal commitment by completing a contract. Your contract should include the following elements:

- Your name
- A statement of your goal, including your current status and target status
- A start date—choose a date in the near future
- A target completion date
- A system of mini-goals and rewards
- Your list of key strategies; you may also want to include your list of beverages to “choose more often” and “choose less often”
- A description of the involvement of others—if you plan to have friends or family members involved in your program, describe what they will do
- A place for your signature and, if possible, the signature of a witness—having someone else witness your contract can help make you more likely to stick with your program

Use the template provided in the [Behavior Change Contract form](#) or devise your own contract.

Monitor Your Progress

Once your plan is complete, take action. Keep track of your progress by continuing to monitor and evaluate your beverage consumption. Use the [Beverage Program Log](#) or devise your own form.

Name _____ Date _____

Behavior Change Cost-Benefit Analysis

Current (target) behavior: _____

New behavior: _____

Short-term benefits of current behavior:

Short-term costs of current behavior:

Long-term benefits of current behavior:

Long-term costs of current behavior:

Short-term benefits of new behavior:

Short-term costs of new behavior:

Long-term benefits of new behavior:

Long-term costs of new behavior:

Key reasons for behavior change: Review your analysis and identify your most important reasons for changing your behavior; post your list of key reasons in a prominent location.

Name _____ Date _____

Pre-Program Beverage Log

Record the beverages you consume during a 24-hour period. List the time, type of beverage, portion size, your location, the source of the beverage (purchased on site or carried with you), and key external and internal influences on your choice (for example, degree of hunger or thirst, your environment, your emotional state, and the people around you). Finally, indicate whether each beverage is on your list of items to “choose more often” (+) or “choose less often” (–). In the table at the bottom of the log, gather resource information for your behavior change program by recording beverage alternatives available to you over the course of the day; you may also expand the list of beverages to choose more and less often.

Time	Beverage	Portion	Location	Source	Influences	+/-

Total beverages on “more often” list: _____ **Total beverages on “less often” list:** _____

Resources (beverage alternatives easily accessible over the course of the day):

<p>Beverages to choose more often: Regular soda Sweetened bottled ice tea Fruit drinks, punches, beverages, blends, ades Whole milk</p>	<p>Beverages to choose less often: Water (plain, mineral, sparkling) Low-fat or nonfat milk Fruit juice (100% juice) Unsweetened herbal tea</p>
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Name _____ Date _____

Behavior Change Contract

(1) I _____ agree to _____
(name) (specify behavior you want to change; include current status)

(2) I will begin on _____ and plan to reach my goal of _____
(start date) (specify final goal)

by _____ .
(final target date)

(3) In order to reach my final goal, I have devised the following schedule of mini-goals. For each step in my program, I will give myself the reward listed.

_____	_____	_____
(mini-goal 1)	(target date)	(reward)
_____	_____	_____
(mini-goal 2)	(target date)	(reward)
_____	_____	_____
(mini-goal 3)	(target date)	(reward)
_____	_____	_____
(mini-goal 4)	(target date)	(reward)
_____	_____	_____
(mini-goal 5)	(target date)	(reward)

My overall reward for reaching my final goal will be _____

(4) I have gathered and analyzed data on my target behavior and have identified the following strategies for changing my behavior:

(5) I will use the following tools to monitor my progress toward reaching my final goal:

(list any charts, graphs, or logs you plan to use)

(6) I have recruited a helper who will witness my contract and _____

(list any way in which your helper will participate in your program)

(continued on following page)

I sign this contract as an indication of my personal commitment to reach my goal.

(your signature)

(date)

(witness's signature)

(date)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROGRAM

Name _____ Date _____

Beverage Program Log

Record the beverages you consume during a 24-hour period. List the time, type of beverage, portion size, your location, the source of the beverage (purchased on site or carried with you), and key external and internal influences on your choice (for example, degree of hunger or thirst, your environment, your emotional state, and the people around you). Finally, indicate whether each beverage is on your list of items to “choose more often” (+) or “choose less often” (–). Add up the number of beverages you consume from each category to monitor your progress. At the bottom of the log, note which of the strategies you developed for your plan that you’ve used; you may also expand the list of beverages to choose more and less often.

Time	Beverage	Portion	Location	Source	Influences	+/-

Total beverages on “more often” list: _____ **Total beverages on “less often” list:** _____

Behavior change strategies in use:

Beverages to choose more often:
 Regular soda
 Sweetened bottled ice tea
 Fruit drinks, punches, beverages, blends, ades
 Whole milk

Beverages to choose less often:
 Water (plain, mineral, sparkling)
 Low-fat or nonfat milk
 Fruit juice (100% juice)
 Unsweetened herbal tea