

Do Your Students Know How Much Sugar and Sodium They Consume?

New free resources educate youth in making healthy drink choices

The [BC Ministry of Health](#), in collaboration with [Dietitians of Canada](#), has produced new fact sheets and posters designed to engage youth and their parents in making healthier drink choices and cutting back on sodium as key healthy eating strategies.

Why focus on sugary drinks reduction?

Sugary drinks include pop, energy drinks, sport drinks, fruit drinks, vitamin-enhanced water, as well as specialty coffee and tea drinks. These drinks are a concern for several reasons: they are associated with weight gain among children, youth and adults; they often crowd out healthier drink choices such as water and milk; and their sugar and acid content promotes tooth decay.

Do children and youth really need to cut back on sodium?

Yes! Children consume more than twice the amount of sodium they need. High sodium intake is associated with heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. So developing a taste for foods with less sodium is a good habit to promote in the early years.

Sodium is a nutrient found in salt but most of the sodium we eat comes from processed package foods, not table salt. Learning to read the Nutrition Facts table on processed foods and selecting foods with 5% Daily Value (DV) or less is a good place to start.

Where can teachers obtain sodium and sugary drink reduction teaching tools?

Colourful display posters that portray key messages on sodium and sugary drink reduction are available from HealthLink BC to help teachers present these important messages to students. Order copies in three different sizes [here](#):

Teachers can also customize and print their own fact sheets as handouts so students can take these key messages on sodium and sugary drinks home to parents. Access the customizable fact sheets [here](#).

For further information about cutting back on sodium or sugary drinks, as well as other healthy eating topics, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or email a registered dietitian through the [HealthLink BC website](#).