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# A Daily Habit to Leave Behind

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I remember my dad telling me when he was a kid that if he was lucky, when his family would go to town on Saturdays his dad would buy him an orange pop. Fast forward to 2014 and now anytime my 2-year-old hears the sound of a pop tab opening, he comes running asking for a taste!

Is all this pop really any good for us? Obviously many people drink pop for the caffeine, but there is also added sugar and in the case of diet pop added artificial sugars. In fact, studies have found an association between America's soda habit and the rising rate of obesity and type 2 diabetes in children and adults. There are also potential concerns about effects on the heart, bones and kidneys. And if you think diet pop is any better, unfortunately it is not clear if that alone is effective in preventing obesity and it could actually contribute to weight gain. Therefore, I would strongly encourage all of us to evaluate our consumption of pop and consider it an occasional treat instead of a daily habit.

Other alternatives to pop would be water (try adding sliced lemons), milk, and unsweetened tea. You also could consider

100% fruit juices, but drink them in small amounts as they can be high in calories.

So how much caffeine should you drink? The general rule is 200 to 300 milligrams for adults which is equivalent to 2 cups of coffee. However, young children should rarely drink caffeinated beverages and teenagers no more than 100 milligrams per day. Caffeine's benefits include improving concentration and focus and alleviating fatigue; however, in excess a person can suffer other unintended consequences. Too much caffeine can cause insomnia, racing heart, dehydration

(by increasing urination), anxiety, and actually impair concentration.

So, rewind to the past and think about how special it was when pop was a treat. Maybe create "Root Beer Friday" in your household (no caffeine) or a "Sprite or 7-Up Saturday" (also no caffeine) and... reach for more water. Many people are amazed at their weight loss simply by cutting out the empty calories in soda alone. Also, try putting lime or lemon in sparkling seltzer water if you need more fizz – and you'll put more fizz in your health overall!

Beverage/Food	Serving Size	Average Amt. (mg)	Range (mg)
Brewed Coffee	8 ounce	85	65-120
Instant Coffee	8 ounce	75	60-85
Decaf, Brewed	8 ounce	3	2-4
Decaf, Instant	8 ounce	3	1-4
Espresso	Single 2 ounce	80	60-100
Cappuccino/Latte	2 ounce	80	60-100
Mochachino	2 ounce	90	70-110
Black Tea	8 ounce	40	30-60
Decaf Black Tea	8 ounce	4	<5
Green Tea	8 ounce	40	30-50
Iced tea mix, unsweetened	8 ounce	13	
Iced tea, ready to drink	8 ounce	30	
Cocoa beverage	5 ounce	5	2-20
Chocolate Milk	8 ounce	5	2-7
Dark chocolate, semi-sweet	1 ounce	20	5-35