Sugar in Drinks

Classroom Activity

**What students will learn:**

* How to calculate the sugar content (grams and teaspoons of sugar) in a range of sweet drinks
* The difference between natural sugar and added sugar
* Why water and milk are the best drink choices.

**What you will need:**

* A packet of sugar cubes (or a bag of sugar and plastic teaspoons)
* Clear plastic cups
* A range of popular drink containers for example:
	+ Water
	+ Plain milk
	+ Flavoured milk
	+ 100% fruit juice
	+ Fruit drink
	+ Sports drink
	+ Soft drink
	+ Energy drink

**Practical activity:**

Arrange drink containers on a table.

**Enquire:**

* Ask students (without checking the nutritional information panel) which drink they think contains the most sugar? The least sugar?
* As a class, arrange the drink containers in the order of which they think contains the least-most sugar.
* Ask students to justify their reasons for ordering the drinks as they did.

**Explore:**

* Ask students to calculate the amount of sugar in each drink using the method outlined on the student handout.
* Measure out sugar cubes (or teaspoons of sugar) in clear plastic cups to make a visual comparison of the amount of sugar in each drink. Organise drinks from lowest to highest sugar content.
* Have a class discussion using the teaching notes over the page.

**Teacher’s notes / key discussion points**

**Discussion questions:**

* Were you surprised by the amount of sugar found in any of the drinks?
* Which drinks contain the most amount of sugar per serve?
* Which drinks contain the least amount of sugar per serve?
* How many serves are in each container? Found on the nutritional information panel).

**Reinforce:**

* Tap water and plain reduced fat milk are the best drink choices.
* Water is cheap and freely available, has no added sugar, artificial colourings or flavourings and helps protect against tooth decay.
* Our bodies need water to grow, think, play and be active.

**Milk drinks:**

* Plain milk contains a small amount of natural sugar (called lactose) and a range of other important nutrients such as calcium and protein.
* Flavoured milk contains both natural and added sugar.
* Plain milk is a better choice compared to flavoured milk as it contains no added sugar.

**Fruit juice and fruit drinks:**

* 100% fruit juice contains no added sugar, however it is very high in natural sugar because of the amount of fruit needed to make a glass of juice. For example there are 3-4 oranges in one glass of juice. Fruit juice is therefore very high in energy and not recommended as an everyday drink choice.
* Fruit drinks are a combination of fruit juice (must contain a minimum of 5%), water and added sugar. They are generally higher in sugar than 100% fruit juice as they contain both natural sugar from fruit juice and added sugar.
* Fruit juice is often thought to be a good choice because it contains vitamin C, however we can easily get our daily vitamin C from fresh fruit, for example ½ an orange.
* As well as containing large amounts of sugar, fruit juice and fruit drinks are also acidic which can increase tooth decay.
* It is best to eat fresh fruit and drink water as it:
	+ is better for your teeth
	+ gives you fibre to help keep you regular
	+ is much more filling.
	+ gives you energy to grow, think, play and be active.

**Artificially sweetened drinks:**

* Contain no sugar but are not recommended because:
* they are acidic and can cause tooth decay.
* they encourage a taste for sweet drinks rather than learning to enjoy water and plain milk.
* they are expensive compared to water.

**Student/Class Handout 1: How much sugar are you drinking?**

Use the information below to work out how much sugar is in each drink.

**You could do this first example as a class.**



1. Look at the nutrition information panel on this drink label.
* How many servings are there per pack? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What is the serving size? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ml
1. Find the per serve column.
2. Look at how many grams of sugar is listed in the per serve column (‘g’ means grams).
3. There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grams of sugar per serve in this drink.
4. Divide this number by 4 grams (as 1 teaspoon of sugar or 1 sugar cube is equal to 4 grams).
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ g ÷ 4 grams = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons

This 375mL can of sweet drink has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons of sugar:

**Student Handout 2: Select and Analyse**

Select a drink container and use it to work through the following steps.

1. Look at the nutrition information panel on the drink label.
* How many servings are there per pack? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What is the serving size? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ml
1. Find the per serve column.
2. Look at how many grams of sugar is listed in the per serving column (‘g’ means grams).
* There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grams of sugar per serve in my drink.
1. Divide this number by 4 grams (as 1 teaspoon of sugar or 1 sugar cube is equal to 4 grams).
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ g ÷ 4 grams = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons

There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons of sugar per serve in my drink.

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