

Switch to Water Challenge

#SwitchtoWater2018

FACT SHEET

What is the Switch to Water challenge?

The Switch to Water challenge is a New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) initiative that highlights the benefits of choosing water over sugary drinks, including soft drinks, fruit juices, and energy drinks.

When does the challenge happen?

The challenge takes place over 30 days this November. Don't worry if you're late to the party, your 30 days can start at any time up until Friday 9 November 2018.

Sounds great. How do I get involved?

It's easy to get involved, simply visit www.nzda.org.nz/switchtowater - take a look at how you can sign up. There's categories for individuals, schools, and workplaces, so there's something for everyone. And there's prizes to be won too!

What are the benefits of switching to water?

The benefits include healthier teeth and reducing the chances of developing tooth decay. As sugary drinks contribute a high amount of energy, in the form of sugar, yet provide no nutritional value themselves, reducing consumption can have an impact on weight loss.

Is it okay to drink flavoured and sparkling waters?

Flavoured waters, including fruit flavoured, and vitamin waters contain added sugars. Flavoured waters can also have acidic additives, which increases your risk of tooth erosion.

Plain mineral water or sparkling water generally does not contain added sugars so are fine to drink while completing this challenge. However, they are still slightly erosive for your teeth so tap water is still your best option. You can make your own healthy flavoured water by adding natural ingredients like fruit, vegetables and herbs to your tap water.

What about fruit juice?

Fruit drinks are usually a combination of added sugars and fruit flavour. Only 100% natural fruit juice contains natural sugars. The main problem is that both contains no fibre and is very high in sugar. It's best to eat your fruit. However, small amounts of 100% fruit juice is ok to have occasionally, whereas fruit drinks should be avoided.

What about alcoholic drinks?

Alcohol isn't part of the Switch to Water challenge. However, since sugary drinks are often used as a mixer for spirits it is worthwhile to cut down on these drinks. Also, to reduce the risk to your health, you should limit how much alcohol you drink.

Are 'diet' versions of drinks okay?

Although the energy levels (kilojoules or calories) are zero, these drinks have a high acidity content. High acidity is erosive on teeth. As well as maintaining the desire for sweet drinks and food (a sweet tooth) these drinks could replace water and low-fat plain milk, which are the recommended choices.

What about sports drinks for the big match or training?

Water is generally the best drink for exercise and sports, as so-called 'sports drinks' are high in sugar. It's really a myth that anything else is needed, as most people aren't at the level where electrolytes (such as those found in sports drinks) are required.

So you're saying that it's only water and milk?

Yes, water and low-fat milk are the best options for the Switch to Water challenge. If you drink coffee or tea make sure you don't add sugar in them. Like any change, it can be difficult, take it a few hours at a time, and see how you go. Don't beat yourself up if you slip up, and remember you're not in it alone, thousands of people are doing this too, right across New Zealand.

nzda.org.nz/switchtowater