



Top 10 Drinks to Ditch

ELIMINATE YOUR MUFFIN TOP ... FAST!

You may be blind-sided by the empty calories and excess fat in some of the common drinks you consume on a daily basis. What you're drinking just might be the primary culprit to that jiggle around your middle – otherwise known as a "muffin top."

While your body only requires water and should be everyone's drink of choice – that's not the reality. Most people get bored with water and are duped into believing the creative marketing hype about other drink options that may seem harmless...until you dig deep, that is.

The biggest problem with most "other drink choices" is that they are loaded with sugar. Clever marketing companies would like you to believe otherwise so they can continue to earn millions of dollars at the expense of your unhealthy, sugary addictions. The average person is consuming 156-200 lbs. of sugar a year! That equates to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of sugar EVERY day. WOW!!!

It's time to ditch the drinks that are contributing to the unattractive "muffin top" and the poor health consequences that go along with it.

Here is the top 10 list to keep “muffin tops” where they belong – on top of muffins and not around your waist!

1. Sodas (Diet and Regular) – DITCH THESE NOW!!!

You may be holding a soda in your hand right this very minute. Shake it loose and ditch it for good! Sodas are one of the top weight-gain culprits – yes, even the diet options. Sodas average 350 empty calories and have 84 grams of sugar. That's like eating 10-12 teaspoons of sugar for one soda. Ick! And the “sugar-free” diet sodas are filled with artificial sweeteners, including aspartame, which acts as a neurotoxin. Many artificial sweeteners are up to 200 times as sweet as sugar. As a result, the body craves more sodas and encourages you to reach for more empty calories and toxic chemicals in each can. With each reach – the more addicted you become. The addiction becomes a vicious high-sugar, high-caloric diet routine, thus being linked to obesity.

2. Sports Drinks

It's over a \$7.5 billion dollar a year industry. Powerades and such are made by many of the popular soda manufacturers and are in tune with addictive ingredients to keep you coming back for more. Most are high in calories, carbohydrates, and sugar. They are basically sodas in “disguise.” You may be asking... “But what about the electrolytes that these drinks replenish?” While it is true that they do indeed replenish electrolytes, there is an unhealthy cost to that element. It's best to regain electrolytes through organic, natural coconut water instead. Or better yet, through a healthy plant-based diet and pure water. Coconut water is around 60 calories a can and may have added sugar due to added juices. Read the labels carefully.

3. Energy Drinks

Ever reach for a “can of energy” in your day only to find that you'll soon need another? The best source of energy is a clean plant-based diet, pure water, proper rest, and exercise. BUT, the commercials for energy drinks will tell you different. One “shot” of energy can last up to 6 hours. REALLY? I think not. The reality is that energy drinks are just as toxic and harmful to the body as sports drinks. These drinks are full of chemicals and do not deliver on their promise. Energy drinks are also loaded with caffeine and are not regulated by the FDA. Energy drinks have been linked to heart damage and degeneration of other vital organs. Why risk it? Just live healthy and you'll have plenty of energy!

4. Espresso “foo-foo” Drinks

Do you enjoy the drink or the experience of drinking a “foo-foo” coffee? The truth is that many people are losing money and gaining weight around their mid-section. The morning drive-thru addiction might be adding anywhere from 500-700 calories to your daily caloric intake as well as adding 25-50 grams of fat and 95-130 grams of sugar. It’s a really BAD way to start the day because you first get a sugar insulin spike followed by the dreaded energy “crash.” And what happens? You reach for another high sugar (food or drink) replacement to “keep you going.”

5. SoBe Green Tea and Other Sweet Teas

I grew up in the South, so I totally understand the sugar “drawl” – oops, I mean DRAW! ☹ But, the sweet tea could very well be your muffin-top’s best friend in camouflage. It’s now time to sever the fake relationship and learn the truth. Sweet tea is adding around 250 calories and 61 grams of sugar to your diet daily, per glass. Instead, learn to enjoy unsweetened tea – cold or hot.

6. Fruit Smoothies

Fruits are healthy and chalked full of antioxidants and nutritious value, but fruit has fructose – a natural sugar. Sugar is sugar to the body, in the sense that it still spikes up insulin levels, turns to fat if it’s not used, and causes weight gain. I’m not telling you to avoid fruit because fruit is a very important part of a healthy diet. What I do want you to be aware of is the extra fruit juice that you may be adding to your fruit smoothies is loaded with sugar. Also, many people are not using fruit smoothies as meal replacements, but rather as an addition to what they are eating. This becomes an added caloric intake without even realizing it.

7. Fruit Juice

“All-natural” fruit juice can be misleading. Many manufacturers have added sugar to the drink, as if the natural fructose in fruit wasn’t enough. A glass of fruit juice contains around 8 teaspoons of sugar. The FDA allows the title “fruit juice” even if it only has 1% fruit juice, while only 44%-48% of juices on the market contain any juice at all. Most have more empty calories and sugar than a soda! A couple big offenders are Capri Sun, Ocean Spray, Minute Maid, Snapple, etc. In fact, a Snapple has more sugar than a glazed Krispy Kreme doughnut. NO – that fact does not give you permission to rush out and eat a doughnut treat!

8. Milk

It does the body good, right? WRONG! That's what the dairy farmers would like you to believe. The truth is that milk should not be consumed...period! Cow's milk isn't just unhealthy (the reasons why are for a report all by itself), but milk has 120-210 calories in an 8 oz. glass. While the calories aren't the highest on this list, the calories add up. It's also important to recognize the excess fat and sugar, which it contains. If you desire milk then reach for unsweetened almond, rice, or coconut milk.

9. Protein Shakes

Protein shakes are the craze these days and can be a quick recovery method after a workout. But, all too often those looking to add protein to their diets to "beef up" are "beefing up" in a way they didn't expect. It all depends on what gets added to the protein drink that makes the difference. Keeping this drink list in mind – it's important to ditch the milk and juice from your shakes. Instead use unsweetened almond or rice milk, water, real fruit, and an organic plant-based protein. The kind of protein you use is VERY important as some are formulated with hidden, toxic ingredients – including artificial sweeteners. Seeds and nuts are fine to add, but keep them to a limit. Often, too many seeds and nuts can add to your muffin top if you consume them daily by the handful.

10. Happy Hour Mishaps

Want to get really happy? Ditch the alcoholic drinks that have mega empty calories. Margaritas contain close to 900 calories (WOW) and other mixed-drinks range from 400-650. Imagine if you had two margaritas at happy hour – that would almost max the daily caloric intake for most. Are you a wine lover? The average wine drinker consumes an average of 2,000 additional calories a month...not to mention all the sugar as well. To burn off a glass of red or white wine, it would require you running at a steady pace for 12-14 minutes.

Think about your drink choices throughout the day and how they all add up. Drinks alone could take your caloric, fat, and sugar intake through the roof. Ditch the unhealthy drinks and watch your muffin top fade away fast!



WENDIE PETT is a nationally renowned fitness expert and coach, mother, speaker, author, Nationally syndicated TV show host and creator of the Visibly Fit™ exercise program. Wendy's Visibly Fit™ instructional DVDs teach wellness maximization through the balance of mind, body and spirit while using one's body as a gym (and saving hundreds in membership fees).

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