

HOWARD COUNTY.
*Unsweetened.*TM

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

GOAL

Get kids and their parents to 'switch the drink' and to learn more about why sugary drinks are a problem.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn how to use the Better Beverage Finder and learn how many healthy options are available and how to choose them.
- Better understand what makes sugary drinks unhealthy and how widely available they are in the community.

SWITCH THE DRINK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students learn how to pick a better beverage using the Better Beverage Finder

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Computers, poster board

HANDOUT

"What drinks we have in our homes"

SHOPPING LIST

"My Better Beverage Shopping List"

AGE GROUP

Elementary School & Middle School

1. On the day before this lesson, ask students to take inventory of all the beverages they have in their homes as pre-homework
2. In class, make a list categorizing the drinks that students found (sodas, sports drinks, juices, water, etc)
3. Discuss the problems with sugary drinks and what we can do about it (i.e. Switch The Drink)
4. Teach students how to use the Better Beverage Finder tool using their own computers or demonstrate on a projector screen
5. Give students the opportunity to choose a few drinks they would like to try from the Better Beverage Finder - create a shopping list to take home
6. Throughout the year, students can bring in labels from beverages and run them through the "Check Your Drink" feature on the Better Beverage Finder
7. Students will find out which of their beverages are better and which are not
8. Once they have decided, students can tape their label to the "Sugary Drinks" or "Better Beverage" poster boards in class

ARTICLE DISCUSSION

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students gain a more in-depth understanding of the risks associated with drinking too many sugary drinks

SUPPLIES NEEDED

"List of Suggested Readings"

AGE GROUP

Middle School & High School

1. Break students into small groups (2 to 4) and give each group a different article to read.
2. Groups should synthesize the important information in the articles and prepare to give a short, informal presentation to the class. Encourage students to get creative with their presentations by making up a song or a skit.
3. After each group has presented, ask students the following discussion questions to further the conversation:
 - What did they learn about sugary drinks from these articles?
 - After reading these, does anyone plan to change anything?
 - Why do you think it's hard to cut back on sugary drinks?
 - What are some of the easy things we can do to cut back and make better choices more accessible to everyone?

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR ARTICLE DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Irony Alert: Coca-Cola Ad Says It's Helping to Fight Obesity

January, 2013

Coca-Cola released an ad series acknowledging the health risks, such as obesity, associated with their products. The ad is ironic, however, and shifts blame off of Coca-Cola, claiming that "all calories count, no matter where they come from."

Why Coke and Pepsi Will Talk Obesity, but Not Diabetes

November, 2013

While Coke and Pepsi have addressed the obesity issue, neither seems to want to talk about the risk of diabetes associated with their products. A recent Georgetown University study explains why.

How far will Big Soda go to keep people from drinking water?

February, 2014

Sports drinks vs. water: how the big soda companies convince consumers that water is not good enough, when in reality, most of us are not active enough to need electrolyte-replenishing beverages such as Gatorade.

Coca-Cola giving \$1.5M to S.A. for health and wellness

June, 2013

PHI and BMSG Statement on In-School Marketing Guidelines

February, 2014

Cash-strapped public schools might be eager to accept large donations from companies such as Coca-Cola, but should unhealthy items such as soda really be advertised in a school? The White House says no. (Two articles)

New Risk Associated with Diet Soda: Depression

January, 2013

While diet soda has long been thought of as a healthy alternative to regular soda, studies have shown that this conception is just plain wrong. Besides the low nutritional value of these diet sodas, a recent study linked overconsumption of diet beverages to depression.

MAPPING ACTIVITY

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to pin-point the locations where better beverages are sold, as well as identify which beverages are healthy.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Computers, poster board, markers, other art supplies

AGE GROUP

Elementary School & Middle School

1. Provide students with a poster board and art supplies such as markers, scissors, colored paper and glue
2. Have students use the Better Beverage Finder to locate stores in the community where better beverages are sold
3. Have students design a map on the poster board indicating these locations, as well as which drinks can be purchased at each one (central location on the map should be the school). Students can complete this project individually or in small groups. To make it simpler, assign a type of drink to each group (e.g. water, 100% juice)
4. Have students present their findings to students in other classrooms, then hang the maps up around school to remind everyone where they can find better beverages in Howard County

ADVERTISING RESEARCH

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students recognize the effect that advertisements can have on their consumer choices and learn to choose better beverages regardless of media exposure.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Handout to record findings: "Beverage Advertisements"

AGE GROUP

Middle School & High School

1. Give students one week to track how many ads they see that promote any beverage options (sugary or not). **Note:** *Ask students to keep track during their usual day-to-day activities. We are not asking them to watch more TV than they normally do.
2. Have students record their findings on the activity handout
3. Back in class, students will report their findings and create an overall summary of the number of ads organized by product type (sugary drink vs. better beverage). Compare the two lists for a class discussion. Possible questions include:
 - Why do you think one type of beverage was advertised more than the other?
 - What sort of patterns did you see in the advertisements? (probe for: celebrity endorsements, athletes, popular music)
 - How do you think these advertising tactics can affect your drink choices?
 - Did you see advertisements for healthy drinks? If so, were they any different from ads for sugary drinks?
 - What other options are available to us?
(present BetterBeverageFinder.org)

OPTIONAL: Present informal class survey to other classes to begin a dialogue about sugary drink advertising and how to make "Better Beverages" more widely available and popular. Perhaps students are challenged to make their own ads for a "Better Beverage" or the "Better Beverage Finder".

SOCIAL MEDIA BLITZ

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students continue to engage in the discussion outside of the classroom in a way that is fun, sharable and creative.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Computers

AGE GROUP

High School

1. Create a closed group on Facebook called "Switch the Drink" where the class can share content about better beverages (Teacher should be in group as well)
2. Have students take a "Switch the Drink" pledge
 - Students and their families can pledge to only drink better beverages for a month and document their experiences and progress on the group with weekly updates
3. Assign a weekly task for students to post in the group, for example:
 - Post an article relating to the beverage industry and summarize and comment on the article in less than 500 words
 - Share a photo of yourself choosing a better beverage
 - Use the better beverage finder and share a new drink from the BBF that you would like to try
 - Post an advertisement for a sugary beverage and provide comment
 - Note: encourage students to share other related content as often as they want and to interact with each other's posts
4. Discuss posts from the Facebook group in class

Follow @HoCoUnsweetened on Facebook and Twitter!

(Note: Users must be 13 years old to be on Facebook. Be aware of privacy concerns and know your school's/organization's social media policy beforehand.)

YOUR VOICE. YOUR CHOICE.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students can express their creativity while addressing the problems with sugary drinks

SUPPLIES NEEDED

depends on type of project, drawing/painting supplies, cameras (phones work), computers

RESOURCES

<http://yvyc.hocounsweetened.org/winners>

<http://youthspeaks.org/thebiggerpicture>

AGE GROUP

Middle School & High School

Allow students to express their creativity while incorporating the better beverage discussion. Encourage students to play to their creative strengths while addressing the issues that have been discussed concerning sugary drinks. The main message in all projects should be how prevalent sugary drinks and sugary drink marketing are in their lives. Here are a few ideas for creativity challenges:

- Provide students with magazines and have them create collages revolving around sugary drink advertising. Have a class discussion about the effects of advertising on the decisions we make as consumers.
- Allow students to write a poem, short story, or screenplay reflecting their feelings about how sugary beverages have impacted their lives.
- Artistically inclined students can create a painting, drawing or even comic strip.
- Born performers can produce a short video, song or podcast.

Note that these activities are ongoing and may take a week or two to complete, with work outside of the classroom possibly being required. Projects may be more appropriate for an art, theater or media class. Students should be able to work in small groups or alone and should be prepared to share their finished projects with the class. Teachers may want to consider requiring a 1-2 page written document to accompany the project explaining the students' motives behind their creation.