Drink Water!
Water is essential for every system in your body to function properly and to maintain optimal hydration. Promoting water consumption is an important strategy for reducing the consumption of sugary drinks, which are contributing to the nation’s obesity epidemic.

SUGARY DRINKS AND CHRONIC DISEASE
Research links sugary drink consumption with an increased risk of:
- Type 2 diabetes;
- Cardiovascular disease;
- Stroke;
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease;
- Pancreatic cancer;
- Endometrial (uterine) cancer; and
- Metabolic syndrome (includes high blood pressure, high triglycerides and insulin resistance).

Thirsty for Health?
Reduce Sugary Beverage Consumption

Tackling the Challenge of Too Much Added Sugar
Although many factors influence rates of obesity and being overweight, research shows that sugary beverages play a significant role. Sugary drinks are no longer considered a special treat and have become an every-day beverage and contribute many extra calories to our diets. Today Americans consume about 250-300 more calories daily than they did several decades ago. Nearly half of this increase is due to greater consumption of sugary drinks which offer “empty” calories, provide no nutritional value and do nothing to support health.

While liquid calories are not as filling as solid food, studies indicate that people who add calories through sugary drinks typically don’t reduce what they consume from other sources. Instead, sugary drink consumption is associated with increased calorie intake, poorer overall diet quality and lower intake of healthier choices such as fruit and milk. To add to the challenge, to burn off the 150 calories found in a typical 12-ounce regular pop, an adult must walk briskly for at least 30 minutes. Because so few people engage in this amount of exercise regularly, consuming sugary drinks makes it even harder for the average person to maintain a healthy weight.

WHERE DOES SUGAR COME FROM IN YOUR DIET?

REGULAR POP CONSUMPTION IN KANSAS
- 23.7 percent of Kansas 6th to 8th grade students report that they drink a pop more than once a day.
- On any given day, 76 percent of Kansas high school students drink a non-diet pop, and 21.6 percent report drinking two or more daily.
- Nearly one-third (30.3 percent) of Kansas adults report drinking a pop or fruit drink or both, one or more times a day.

The Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation of the Kansas Hospital Association has created a series of resources designed to inform and support efforts to promote healthy food and beverage options within health care settings. The Public Health Law Center assisted in creating this document which is based on a resource originally developed in partnership with Stacia Clinton and Health Care Without Harm, with assistance from Jamie Harvie with the Institute for a Sustainable Future. Financial support for this series was provided by the Kansas Health Foundation. More detailed information and other resources in this series can be found on the Healthy Kansas Hospitals website at www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org.
Thirsty for Health? DRINK WATER!

Marketing Healthier Choices

Health care nutrition services departments, workplace cafeterias and vendors are learning to use the “4Ps” of marketing — Product, Promotion, Placement and Pricing — to promote purchases of healthier products. A basic Product strategy is to make sure that a good mix of healthy choices is available — offer attractive fresh fruit and herb-infused water (“spa” water) in vending and retail locations; low- or no-calorie waters; unsweetened coffees and teas; and skim milk.

Promotion strategies include raising awareness, such as posting signs at beverage points-of-purchase about the health benefits of water and the caloric consequences of sugary beverages. Displays, such as a plastic tub filled with sugar to illustrate the approximately 40 pounds of sugar the average American consumes in sugary beverages per year, also are effective. Other ways to educate about healthier products include menu labeling with calorie information, physical activity messages showing how much exercise it takes to burn off a sugary beverage and/or using a “red, yellow, green” traffic light scheme to help people understand which beverages are healthy and which should be drunk only rarely, if ever.

Placement strategies make healthier products more visible, appealing and convenient, while moving the less healthy options to less visible, less easy-to-grab spots. For example, place healthy products on the checkout counter, in grab-n-go baskets, at eye-level on shelves or in the prime selling slots in vending machines.

Pricing is another important marketing tool. Less healthy products should be priced higher than healthy foods/beverages. Using price differentials not only encourages purchases of healthy products, but also more accurately reflects the cost of unhealthy products to the economy and the health of the workforce.

THE TASTE MYTH

A common misperception is that bottled water tastes better than tap water. However, in many blind taste tests, consumers actually have preferred the taste of tap water to bottled water or could not tell the difference. Recent market research shows that growing numbers of restaurant diners are ordering tap water over other beverages. Water has overtaken pop in popularity, as awareness about its health impact has grown.

Water Is Clearly the Best Choice

Hands down, water is the best healthy beverage choice for most people in most situations. While bottled water is healthier than sugary drinks, tap water is the smarter, cheaper choice. It is safe, better for the environment, less expensive and in many cases offers health benefits such as fluoride. Hospitals and other health care facilities can promote healthier beverage environments by taking steps to make water more appealing and accessible within their campuses.