



# ORAL HEALTH BYTES

A Newsletter For Local Oral Health Programs

## SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGE REDUCTION (AND RETHINK YOUR DRINK)



Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are a staple in many diets, but beneath their sweet taste lies a not-so-sweet reality. Consuming high amounts of SSBs has been linked to:

- Increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes
- Tooth decay and other oral health problems
- Higher likelihood of heart disease and stroke
- Nutrient imbalance and dehydration

SSBs can also create symptoms of addiction and depression, as well as mood swings and energy crashes. This newsletter edition offers some resources to share with your communities and dental providers to help develop healthier drink habits.



Sugar is a major contributor to oral diseases: when cavity-causing bacteria already in the mouth are exposed to sugar from our diets, they start to metabolize or breakdown the sugar and produce acids that slowly dissolve the enamel in our teeth. The enamel in our teeth decays over time with repeated exposure to acids, resulting in cavities. The greatest source of added sugars in a typical American diet are sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), which include soft drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee and tea, energy drinks, and flavored waters, leading public health professionals across the world to focus on SSB reduction and encouraging individuals to "rethink your drink."

## Resources

COHTAC hosts and regularly updates a comprehensive [Resource Center](#) on our website full of vetted materials that LOHPs can use. You can find a number of [Rethink Your Drink](#) resources there, including a few we wanted to highlight.

- The [When Sugar is Not So Sweet](#) provider guide was designed to guide dental providers in educating patients of all ages about SSBs and encourage SSB reduction using motivational interviewing and the 5As strategy (ask, advise, assess, assist, and arrange). LOHPs can share or provide this flip book resource to dental providers in their communities to support nutrition education in dental offices, but it can also be used in many other educational settings, including schools, health fairs, and community events.



- Under the [SugarScience at UCSF](#) header, you can find more resources from another center at UCSF dedicated to providing evidence-based, scientific information about sugar and its impact on health, including oral health. You can find links to their [Healthy Beverages Initiative](#) (in particular, check out the [webinar on community engagement in San Francisco](#), an example of community-engaged policy change) and their [Resource Kit](#) (full of customizable flyers, social media posts, and other materials).
- We also include information on another public health intervention that works to reduce SSB consumption: [SSB taxes](#). It includes an [overview of SSB taxes in California](#), a paper describing [how the Oakland tax was enacted](#), and evidence on how well these taxes work.

COHTAC also provides a variety of [oral health education](#) materials, including family-friendly resources on [nutrition and SSB reduction](#) like a [Sesame Street video](#) on tooth-friendly foods.

Another great resource is the [LOHP Slack Workspace](#) – join the #obj4-ssb-reduction channel to share more resources and ideas or ask other LOHPs questions about meeting your SSB reduction objectives.

As always, reach out to [COHTAC](#) with any questions or suggestions, and keep an eye on our website for [upcoming webinars](#).



### Keep Kids Cavity-Free This Summer with Medi-Cal Dental Check-Ups

With summer in full swing, it's essential to keep families on track with good oral health habits, especially as kids may fall into a "summer slump" and neglect their routines. Encourage your community to utilize their Medi-Cal dental benefits to ensure children get the check-ups and treatments they need.

During summer, children may consume sugar-sweetened beverages like sodas, sports drinks, and fruit juices, increasing the risk of tooth decay. These drinks often replace healthier options like water and milk. Encourage families to prioritize their oral health by:

1. **Choosing Water:** Make water the go-to drink for hydration.
2. **Limiting Sugary Drinks:** Reduce the availability of sugar-sweetened beverages at home.
3. **Visiting the Dentist:** Regular dental check-ups are essential for good oral health. Remind families that Medi-Cal dental benefits cover these visits, making it easier to catch and address dental issues early. Scheduling a dentist visit during the summer can prevent problems that might interfere with the school year.

Explore and download resources from [SmileCalifornia.org](#) such as the ones below to promote tooth-friendly habits this summer.

- **Rethink Your Drink Social Media Image:** [English](#)
- **Healthy Smiles Start With Healthy Foods Flyer:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- **Is It Teething Time for Your Baby? Infographic:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- **Fluoride Infographic:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Let's make this summer a cavity-free one!

To stay updated on the *Smile, California* campaign, [sign up for Smile Alerts](#).

# National Resource: Drinking Water Alliance

## National Drinking Water Alliance Fact Sheets

**Kids' bodies work best when hydrated the healthy way—with water!**

**DRINK WATER AGU**

- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks prevents weight gain and type 2 diabetes.
- Staying hydrated helps children think better.
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks helps prevent dental cavities.

Kids don't drink enough water. And they drink too many sugary drinks. You can help your kids by serving water at home and asking the places where they learn and play to make water first for them. Learn more at [www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org).

**NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE**

**Put Water on MyPlate!**

**NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE**

**HEALTHY HYDRATION**

More than half of school-age children are under-hydrated and too many children routinely drink sugary beverages—and that makes it harder for their minds and bodies to work well. Help them hydrate the healthy way by making the availability of safe and free drinking water at schools a priority. Learn more about water access and promotion in schools at [www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org).

- Staying hydrated helps children think better**
  - Being properly hydrated can improve children's memory and attention.<sup>1</sup>
  - Even mild levels of dehydration may result in decreased concentration, attention and short-term memory.<sup>2</sup>
  - A drink of water can improve children's visual attention and fine motor skills.<sup>3</sup>
- Drinking water, rather than sugary drinks, helps prevent tooth decay**
  - Children who primarily drink water or milk have fewer dental caries than those who drink soda.<sup>4</sup>
  - The more sugary beverages children consume, the higher their risk for dental disease.<sup>5</sup>
  - A drink of water after meals rinses the mouth and reduces acidity pH.<sup>6</sup>
- Children's bodies work best when hydrated the healthy way—with water!**
  - Water performs critical functions in the body. It is needed for biochemical reactions, temperature regulation, transportation of nutrients throughout the body, and is an important factor in cell metabolism and gene expression.<sup>7</sup>
  - Drinking plain water instead of sugary drinks can reduce weight and prevent excess weight gain in children.<sup>8</sup>
  - Childhood obesity has short- and long-term negative impacts on emotional, social, and physical health.<sup>9</sup>

**NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE**

[www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org) KASPER PERMANTER

## CDPH CalFresh Healthy Living Program



### CDPH CalFresh Healthy Living Program to Launch New Ad Campaign and Host Community Events Beginning July of 2024

In July, the CDPH CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) team will launch a statewide social marketing campaign called Not So Sweet Side (NSSS), which aims to educate SNAP-Ed audiences about the health risks associated with sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB's).



As part of the NSSS media plan, the CFHL team will run ads on billboards, social media, radio and TV in key markets across the state. As part of the campaign, CFHL is proud to promote healthier beverage consumption through Rethink Your Drink community engagement events. Below, please find the CFHL **Rethink Your Drink timeline** of events for 2024:

Task	Due Date
New Media Campaign Launch	July 8, 2024
Rethink Your Drink Digital Resources Live	July 8, 2024
Rethink Your Drink Partner Webinar	August 21, 2024
Rethink Your Drink Activation Period	September 3 through 30

To support our partners in the field, CFHL is also developing new and specific Rethink Your Drink assets for LHDs to utilize to extend the messaging in their communities.

These include:

- Risk of SSB infographic
- Risk of SSB game mat and nutrition facts cards for kids and adults
- Risk of SSB educational display
- New RYD sticker
- New Coloring/Activity sheet
- New handout with QR code and URL that leads to a virtual library of healthy drink recipes.



Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to engage your community with RYD resources! Stay tuned for additional information about the August 21 Rethink Your Drink Partner Webinar. For more information, visit [RethinkYourDrinkDay.com](https://RethinkYourDrinkDay.com) or email [CFHL\\_PR@rs-e.com](mailto:CFHL_PR@rs-e.com).

## Calendar

- July 31 - Progress Report 4 due to OOH**
- Aug 21 - Webinar on ReThink Your Drink hosted by NPAB**
- Aug 30 - Data form due to OOH**
- Aug 31 - Back to school**
- Sept 30 - Budget realignment due to OOH**
- Sept 30 - Q4 invoices due to OOH**





## OOH Team Spotlight: Clay Cook



Clay is a program consultant for the Office of Oral Health. In April 2024, he marked one year with OOH. In this short time, he has made several notable contributions.

Clay manages and provides programmatic support on several state contracts, including but not limited to, a statewide effort to establish community-based clinical education rotations for dental students, technical assistance for LOHPs on school dental programs and partnership engagement, and the development of a community oral health worker training program. He is also involved in the preparation of requests for proposals and requests for applications.

As a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, Clay is keen on maximizing process efficiency and better meeting the needs of OOH's customers – the diverse people and communities of California. He is currently leading a quality improvement effort focused on the LOHP budget revision process, which LOHPs can expect to hear more about soon. He is also working to identify ways to better facilitate the submission and review of LOHP deliverables, which also will be announced soon. Exciting things are on the way!

When Clay first joined the OOH team, he was also new to California. So, in his free time, he has enjoyed exploring all the beauty the state has to offer. After a year he knows he has barely scratched the surface, and there's plenty more exploring to come!



## LOHP Spotlight: Trinity County

### Rethink Your Drink: Transforming Health, One Sip at a Time

Nestled in Northern California, Trinity County is not just a picturesque landscape – it's also a hub of community-focused residents. Community Health Workers from the H&HS Public Health Branch take on the role of health advocates through outreach and igniting for change in oral health outcomes. As spring weather warms the mountain air, our team prepares for the opportunity to be educators and advocates for their community.



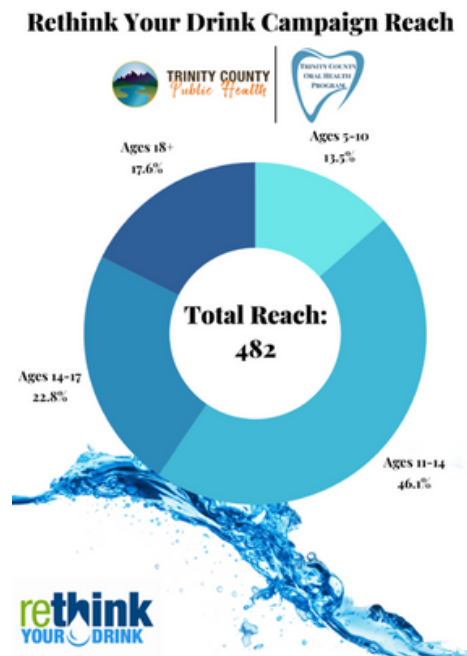
The Trinity County Oral Health Program has once again begun the Rethink Your Drink Campaign, aimed at empowering our community to make informed choices about their beverage consumption. With a focus on promoting oral health and overall wellness, this initiative has made a splash at local events: Trinity County College & Career Expo, Reaching Forward (local youth engagement workshops), and the Annual Trinity County Children’s Festival with a total reach of 482 individuals.

At the Career fair, adults and youth had the chance to explore the surprising truth behind their favorite beverages. From seemingly innocent fruit juices to popular energy drinks, participants discovered just how much added sugars lurk within these everyday choices. Armed with this knowledge, attendees can take proactive steps toward reducing their sugar intake and improving their oral health.

Meanwhile, the Reaching Forward event designed to educate and engage middle school pupils on the consequences of vape and tobacco use paved the way for the Trinity County Oral Health Program to host an interactive workshop that discussed the negative impact of not just tobacco and vape in the oral cavity, but sugar-sweetened beverages as well. Through an engaging “Jeopardy” trivia, pupils learned about the etiology of tooth decay, how much sugar is truly inside their favorite beverages, how vape and tobacco impact their oral health, and the importance of making mindful beverage choices for a healthier smile.



But the fun does not stop there! Families and children of all ages were invited to come enjoy the Annual Children’s Festival. Through visual displays, informative literature, and recipe cards, attendees were shocked to discover just how much sugar could be consumed from one SSB.



Email [DentalDirector@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:DentalDirector@cdph.ca.gov) to suggest future articles and provide feedback.

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