



August 2021

Dear Communities,

The VIVA Connects team hopes that you are all doing well, and finding ways to safely enjoy activities outside. This newsletter has been designed to easily provide the most current and accurate health information to you all, so that you may keep yourselves and your communities safe. Please feel free to share this information with community members and loved ones.



## Stay Healthy, Drink Water



Many Americans drink soda, juice, and other sweetened drinks that have lots of added sugar in them. This can lead to serious health issues over time.

***Did you know that sugary drinks are the #1 source of added sugars in the average American diet?!***

## Why are sugary drinks unhealthy?

Drinking sugary drinks can increase your risk of developing serious health conditions. Weight gain, obesity, type II diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, tooth cavities, and other health conditions may occur if you consume too much sugar.

Luckily, drinking less or no sugary drinks can help keep you feeling good and lower your risk of developing health conditions.

## How much sugar is in my drink?

Many people don't realize how much sugar is added to drinks! Even fruit juice, which people think is a healthy beverage, is full of sugars.

According to the [CDC](#), adults should not have more than 12 teaspoons of sugar a day, and children ages 2 and younger should have *NO* added sugars in food or drinks.

Also keep in mind that many foods, condiments, salad dressings, dried fruit, candy, chips, etc. all contain added sugars! This means that you need to make sure that you are limiting your sugars consumed in sugary drinks.

See below for a chart of how much sugar is added in popular drinks.

Drink (12-ounce serving)	Teaspoons of Sugar	Calories
Bottled Water	0 teaspoons	0
Diet Cola	0 teaspoons	0
Sugar-Free Drink Mix	0 teaspoons	0
Sugar-Free Lemonade	0 teaspoons	0
Unsweetened Tea	0 teaspoons	0
Sports Drink	2 teaspoons 	75
Lemonade	6¼ teaspoons 	105
Orange Juice	7½ teaspoons 	160
Sweet Tea	8½ teaspoons 	120
Powdered Drink Mix (with sugar)	9 teaspoons 	145
Cola	10¼ teaspoons 	150
Fruit Punch	11½ teaspoons 	195
Root Beer	11½ teaspoons 	170
Grape Juice	12 teaspoons 	200
Orange Soda	13 teaspoons 	210

## How much water should I be drinking?

- Everyone's body is different, but adults should drink about 7 cups of water daily
- If you are exercising in the heat and sweating, drinking extra water with electrolytes is helpful
- Drink extra fluids when the weather is hot or when you are sick



## How do I break my bad habit of drinking sugary drinks?

It can be tricky trying to find ways to avoid sugary drinks and drink more water, but here are some ways that can help you to choose water:

- Add fresh cut fruit to flavor your water
- Add a small dash of 100% juice to your water
- Don't buy sugary drinks at the store, instead keep a jug of cool water in the fridge
- Avoid adding sweeteners, sugary creamers, and syrups to coffee and tea

- Carry a reusable water bottle with you so that you can always refill it and have your own water



*For more information, visit:*

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/drinks.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html)

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/added-sugars.html>

<https://medlineplus.gov/dehydration.html>

***Don't forget to save your wallet  
and the environment! Invest in a  
reusable water bottle that you can  
fill up at home or from fountains!***

## *Community Highlight: Alamogordo Desert Critters Trail*

There are 19 stone monuments waiting to be discovered throughout Washington Park in Alamogordo. City of Alamogordo in partnership with Otero Health Council *HEAL team* (Healthy Eating Active Living) invites the community to explore the new Desert Critters Trail. Desert Critters Trail partners included: City of Alamogordo, Otero Soil and Water Conservation District, Otero County Community Health Council HEAL Action Team, US Forest Service - Lincoln National Forest, NM Department of Health, The Grindstone Group, and Eco-Servants. This project was funded by Paso del Norte Health Foundation.

HEAL proposed the idea of a scavenger hunt style trail with this goal in mind: Creating a community environment that promotes physical activity and reduces sedentary behavior. City leadership offered Washington Park for placement and HEAL agreed this is an ideal location. It offers an accessible, safe, friendly place for families to spend outdoors time walking and playing. Desert Critters Trail provides a fun and active way to learn about local fauna.

The Trail promotes being physically active at one's own pace, with a social support aspect. Expected benefits for individuals and the community include: enjoying more outdoor time, increased use of a neighborhood park where children can gain new physical activity experiences, revitalizing a cornerstone park, and enhancing a natural setting that is easily accessible from several residential areas.



“Making physical activity the easy choice for individuals and families is the goal of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation’s Physical Activity initiative. The Desert Critters Trail does just that by providing a fun activity for families to be active together,” said Jana Renner, Program Officer from Paso del Norte Health Foundation.

“Paso del Norte Health Foundation based in El Paso TX generously funded this project through their HEAL Initiative, and we were pleased to have the opportunity to help support this educational, fun and health-promoting project together with regional partners in Otero and Lincoln Counties,” said Vicky Milne of the Otero Soil and Water Conservation District.



“This project is a fun new opportunity for families. I am looking forward to bringing my own kids to the park to find the Desert Critters.” Kayla Wedlow, Otero Health Council HEAL Chairperson.

Going to the park is fun, free, and improves fitness and emotional well-being. Documented benefits of physical activity include: improved bone health, weight management, improved cardio-respiratory health, improved cognition, reduced anxiety and depression, improved sleep, and reduced risk of many cancers according to the CDC Physical Activity [webpage](#).

Learn more about Desert Critters Trail in Alamogordo, [here](#).

- *Maureen Schmittle*  
*Health Promotion Specialist and VIVA Connects Community Member*

You are invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony for  
*Desert Critters Trail*  
at Washington Park Stage  
First Street and Washington Ave, Alamogordo  
**Thursday August 26 ~ 3:15 pm**



SCAN ME

*Please come explore and enjoy the scavenger hunt trail.  
Attendees will receive a small gift and fruit snack.  
For more info call Maureen at 437-9340 ext 5.  
Learn about local fauna at our website: [tiny.cc/desertcritterstrail](http://tiny.cc/desertcritterstrail)*



Trail funded by  PASO DEL NORTE HEALTH FOUNDATION

*Stay safe, mask up, and get outside!*

*Sincerely,*

*The VIVA Connects Team*

Compiled by Laurel Fimbel for VIVA Connects

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