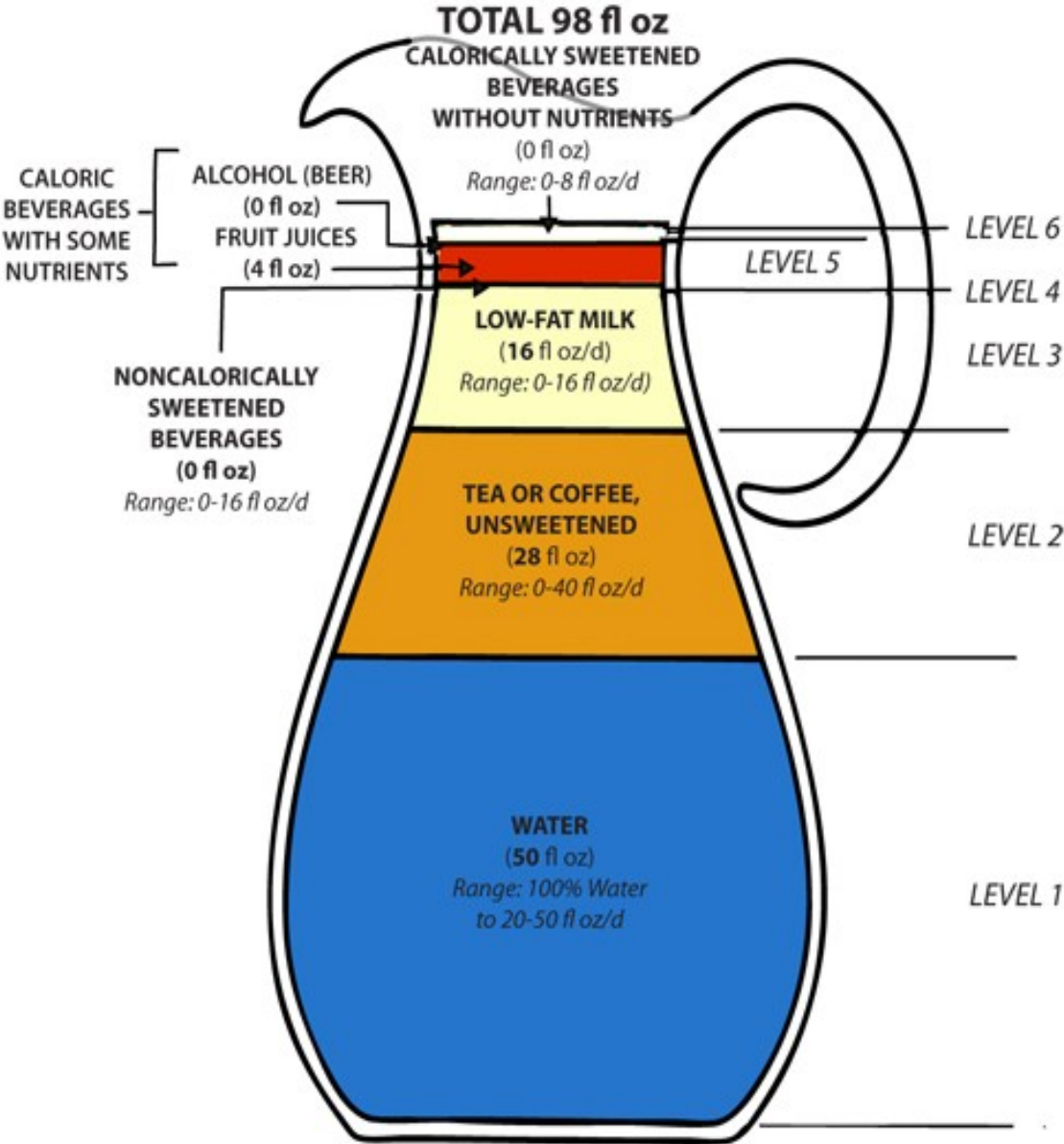


BEVERAGE PYRAMID

Below is a picture representation of the daily recommendations for beverage consumption. Read the accompanying guide for more information.



BEVERAGE PYRAMID GUIDE

Level 1: Water

Pure water provides everything the body needs to restore fluids lost through sweating and the removal of waste. Water should be the beverage you turn to most of the time.

Level 2: Tea and Coffee

After water, tea and coffee are the two most commonly consumed beverages on the planet. Drunk plain, they are calorie-free beverages brimming with antioxidants, flavonoids, and other biologically active substances that may be good for health. Up to three or four cups of coffee or tea a day appear to be fine.

Level 3: Low-Fat and Skim Milk and Soy Beverages

Fortified soy milk is a good alternative source of calcium and vitamin D for those who prefer not to drink cow's milk. Low-fat milk, sold as 1% or 1.5% milk, or skim milk, which is virtually fat-free, are the best choices because they contain much less saturated fat than reduced-fat milk or whole milk, which contain 2% and 4% milk fat, respectively. So it's best for adults to limit milk (and all dairy products) to a glass or two a day; less is fine, as long as you get enough calcium from other sources. For growing children, no more than two glasses of milk per day.

Level 4: Noncalorically Sweetened Beverages

Diet sodas and other diet drinks are sweetened with calorie-free artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (Equal[®], others), saccharin (Sweet 'N Low[®], others), or sucralose (Splenda[®]); a new addition to the market are drinks sweetened with stevia, a calorie-free sweetener made from the leaves of a South and Central American shrub. These diet drinks are a better choice than sugar-sweetened soft drinks because they are lower in calories.

Level 5: Caloric Beverages with Some Nutrients

This category includes fruit juice, vegetable juice, whole milk, sports drinks, vitamin-enhanced waters, and alcoholic beverages. One-hundred-percent fruit juice has most of the nutrients of the fruit itself, but it usually delivers more energy. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends no more than one serving (4 ounces) of 100% fruit juice as part of the daily fruit intake.

Vegetable juice is a lower calorie alternative to fruit juice, but may contain a lot

of sodium. Whole milk is a good source of calcium and vitamin D, but has nearly twice the calories as skim milk and a significant source of saturated fat. Sports drinks have fewer calories than soft drinks, but should only be drunk by endurance athletes who exercise for more than an hour at a stretch and who sweat a lot. Vitamin-enhanced waters, meanwhile, are not necessary for anyone who takes a daily multivitamin, and adding vitamins to a sugary drink does not make it a healthy choice. Alcohol may have benefits for some but may be hazardous for others.

Level 6: Calorically Sweetened Beverages

The Beverage Guidance Panel gave its "least recommended" designation to beverages that are sweetened with sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, or other high-calorie sweeteners and that have few other nutrients. These include carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks, fruit drinks, lemonade, and other "ades." They get the thumbs down as a daily beverage because they provide so many calories and virtually no other nutrients. Routinely drinking these beverages can lead to weight gain and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes. Fruit smoothies, many flavored coffee and tea drinks, and some so-called energy drinks also fall into this category.