



CHALLENGE:

Kick your soda habit and go “pop-free” for the month

While sodas taste great and provide a nice little energy boost, they can be quite harmful to our long-term health. Soft drinks are one of the substances linked directly to weight gain, as they are a high source of calories, but don’t make you feel full. Even the benefits of diet sodas have come into question as they have also been shown to promote weight gain rather than weight loss.

Soft drinks are also known to cause damage to tooth enamel, limit hydration, promote blood sugar dysregulation and diabetes, and can contribute to insomnia and sleep disorders.

Your challenge for the month of is to ditch those empty calories and find a deliciously hydrating substitute!

How to wean off soda:

If you’ve ever tried something like this before, you may know that giving up a soda habit isn’t always easy. The sugar and caffeine in soft drinks can be quite addictive and many people experience withdrawal symptoms like headaches, fatigue, or crankiness without their daily fix. In order to make your transition away from soft drinks more pleasant and sustainable, it’s helpful to wean off the drink slowly. Here’s how:

Reduce your soft drink intake by 25% every 4 days.

For example, if you drink 1, 4, or 8, 12-oz. soft drinks per day (there’s 12 ounces in one can), your schedule would look like this:

	1 drink per day	4 drinks per day	8 drinks per day
Days 1-4	9oz	3 12oz sodas	6 12oz sodas
Days 5-8	6oz	2 12oz sodas	4 12oz sodas
Days 9-12	3oz	1 12oz soda	2 12oz sodas
Days 13-30	No soda	No soda	No soda

Alternatives to soft drinks:

If you're used to sipping soda throughout the day, you'll probably want to find a satisfying beverage alternative. Here are some simple solutions:

- ❑ **Spruced up water:** Add slices of your favorite fruits and vegetables (lemons, oranges, watermelon, cucumber, mint, or limes) to your water for a flavorful drink.
- ❑ **Green tea:** Green tea is a great choice for those of you who rely on soft drinks for your caffeine fix. Filled with antioxidants, green tea will provide a nourishing energy boost.
- ❑ **Sparkling water:** If it's fizz you're craving, enjoy sparkling water either plain, with your favorite fruit, or with a splash of fresh fruit juice.
- ❑ **Fruit-sweetened seltzer:** At the grocery store you'll find a variety of flavored seltzers sweetened with fruit essence. These can be a great alternative to soda, but be sure to check the ingredients and choose a drink without added sugar.
- ❑ **Kombucha:** This fermented drink is a great, naturally fizzy alternative to soda. You can find it in most grocery stores, often sweetened naturally with fruit juice.
- ❑ **Coconut water:** Coconut water's electrolyte content makes it great for hot summer days or during post-workout recovery.
- ❑ **Unsweetened iced tea:** Iced tea can be a refreshing energy-booster; just make sure to sweeten it naturally with coconut sugar, stevia, or honey.
- ❑ **Vitamin C:** Though it doesn't match up flavor-wise, a powdered vitamin C mixed with water can support your adrenals and promote good energy while you're weaning off caffeine. Look for a buffered vitamin C powder at your grocery store, like Emergen-C.

Tips to help you stick with it:

Now that you have your schedule and your alternatives, it's important to make sure your hard work isn't in vain and you're set up for long-term, soda-free success. Here are some tips to help you stick with the challenge even after the month ends:

- ❑ **Know why you want to quit.** There may be several reasons to stop drinking soda, such as weight loss, reducing diabetes risk, tooth and bone health, or even saving money. When the challenge gets hard, remind yourself of your motivation in order to keep going.
- ❑ **Track your consumption.** It's easy to fool yourself into thinking you're not drinking much soda. Be honest with yourself about your soda intake and come up with alternative beverages for each period of the day.
- ❑ **Make sure you're eating enough food.** We sometimes crave soda because we are experiencing low blood sugar and need a snack or meal. Make sure you're eating plenty of protein and vegetables in order to reduce the need for sugar and caffeine.

Name_____

Month Completed_____

Harker School Wellness Program / **Kick the Soda Habit Challenge**

Use this log to track the amount of soda you drink each day (in ounces). Try to cut down your consumption as the month goes on. Aiming for no or very little soda by the end of the month. Submit completed log to HR to earn 10 wellness points. (100 points max in this category)

Week 1

Day 1 _____
Day 2 _____
Day 3 _____
Day 4 _____
Day 5 _____
Day 6 _____
Day 7 _____

Week 2

Day 8 _____
Day 9 _____
Day 10 _____
Day 11 _____
Day 12 _____
Day 13 _____
Day 14 _____

Week 3

Day 15 _____
Day 16 _____
Day 17 _____
Day 18 _____
Day 19 _____
Day 20 _____
Day 21 _____

Week 4

Day 22 _____
Day 23 _____
Day 24 _____
Day 25 _____
Day 26 _____
Day 27 _____
Day 28 _____

Signature_____ Date_____

I, the employee named above, guarantee that the information contained in this verification is true and accurate and I understand that HR may verify any forms submitted for the purpose of obtaining a wellness discount. I understand that any inaccurate and/or false statements on this form may lead to the loss of all or a portion of my wellness discount.

To receive credit, this form must be submitted to HR within 30 days of completion and no later than December 5, 2019.