

## The Pop Quiz

By Marie I. LoPresti RD, MSPHN, LD/N  
Senior Public Health Nutritionist  
Osceola County Health Department

Do you remember taking pop quizzes? Teachers that had “a thing” about pop quizzes were not in one’s favorite list. In spite of this, the thought of a not too good grade, kept many of us studying every day and on top of the “stuff”.

Today, it has occurred to me to try a column pop quiz. Here it goes... you have in front of you a 20-ounce bottle of regular pop (soda). Examining the label it states: an 8-ounce serving will supply 100 calories. The question is, do you know how many calories you get if you drink the whole thing? Yes, the whole 20 oz content.

You are right! 250 calories, since the 100 calories are just for the 8 oz serving of the bubbling liquid. Good job!

I have been asking people how many 20 oz bottles of pop they drink as a daily event. One person confessed drinking six of them every day. But added, “I stopped”. Others told me of taking one, two, or three a day. It all depended on the weather, easy access or only choice, or if they were provided free of charge.

If we do a simple math calculation, the results are an eye opener. If one 20 oz bottle has 250 calories, two have 500. 750 for three, 1000 for four. Five have 1250 calories and six bottles 1500. Are you surprised? To put it all in perspective, a woman who does light work usually needs close to 1500 calories a day. An older man, under the same conditions, will probably need 2000 calories per day. The facts are clear; pops are just plain sugar with basically no nutritional benefit! Do you enjoy them? Cut back on them!

Let me explain another nutrition-math fact. If 250 extra calories (one bottle) are consumed daily and these calories are not used for the body energy needs, they will be stored as fat. Multiplying 250 calories by 365 days in a non-leap year yields 91,250 calories. All to be stored if not used up! Now hear this, every pound of fat represents 3500 calories. This means that by simple division we get 26 extra pounds that most likely we do not want. This is for only one 20 ounce bottle drank daily for a full year! Imagine the guy drinking six of them every day. WOW! (By the way, some padding (fat) is necessary for good health. Nevertheless, excessive fat is related to many medical conditions like Diabetes type 2, joint problems, asthma, difficulty breathing (apnea), and high blood pressure, among others.)

“Liquid candy” is what these drinks are called. There are many other drinks (specialty coffees for example) that are becoming popular. They can be included as rich desserts due to their caloric content. They are items that fit in the occasional or sparingly use according to the “Food Guide Pyramid”. And with good reason!

The number of American adults and children that are overweight or obese is alarming. It is time to take a serious look at the type, quantity, and frequency of food and drinks we choose. Want to take a step in the right direction? For starters, do the following for at least one month. Drink water for almost every regular soda, sugary or fun drink you may have wanted to drink. Ask your doctor guidance in what type, how intense and how long your physical activity should be. Most experts recommend one hour of exercise a day. Many people enjoy walking for exercise. If already walking 30 minutes, increase gradually to 60 minutes. Call us and let us know your achievement. We will rejoice with you! Our most famous slogan is “Small Steps, Big Rewards”.

So, as I finish, check your food and drink labels. Interesting and useful information is contained in every label. Choose foods and drinks to compose healthy meals. Take a nutrition class. Pass the quiz to someone else and in nutrition information, BE HUNDRED PERCENT FAD FREE!

For more information on food and nutrition topics, log on to [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov), [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov), [www.osceolahealth.org](http://www.osceolahealth.org), and [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). Call the Osceola County Health Department –Closing The Gap Program-Diabetes for information on our nutrition activities. Our free sessions in English and Spanish cover: Diabetes Type 2 management and prevention, nutrition and physical activity in weight management and heart health (hypertension and cholesterol). For more information call: (407) 343-2082 or (407) 944-7117.

The WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) Program is a supplemental nutrition program available to children from birth to five years of age and to pregnant, breastfeeding and women after delivery. There are income guidelines to participate. For more information call (407) 343-2085 in Kissimmee, (407) 943-8679 in St Cloud, and (407) 943-8601 in Poinciana.

Nutrition, parenting, and consumer related classes are offered through University of Florida Extension Services. You can also subscribe to their newsletter. Call (321) 697-3000 or log on to <http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu/> for resources, calendar of events, and information.

To learn about Dental, Immunizations, Maternity, Medical, Preventive, and Public Health services at the Osceola County Health Department, log on to [www.osceolahealth.org](http://www.osceolahealth.org) or call (407) 343-2000. There are four convenient locations in Osceola County. Many private insurance plans are also accepted. For a direct number to Primary Care Services of Poinciana, call 407-943-8600.