Research continues to show that drinking regular soda has zero upside for your health and plenty of down-side. In fact, one study found that even thin or normal-weight people run a 13% greater risk of developing diabetes if they drink an average of just one sugar-sweetened beverage a day, like soda, sweetened tea, or full-sugar energy drinks.

Most of these drinks are really nothing BUT sugar, water, and flavorings – they’re exceptionally “nutrient poor,” even in comparison to other sweetened foods like some cereals and a lot of baked goods. So why not make this the year you and your family “can” your sugary soda habit? And satisfy your sweet tooth with healthier options!

As in 2 MILLION – the number of new diabetes cases that could be avoided in 5 years if Americans gave up sugary soda.
EAT BETTER
Try lots of different fruits, veggies, and whole grains for a healthy diet. You’re bound to find a few you really like!

**BELL PEPPERS**
We don’t tend to think of veggies as sweet, but some are fairly high in natural sugar, including sweet potatoes, pumpkin, peas, and sweet corn. As a snack, perhaps no veggie is as delightfully sweet and crunchy as bell pepper strips. Plus they’re nutritionally powerful, full of vitamins A and C, beta-carotene, fiber, and more!

LIVE HEALTHIER
OK, so what are some of these healthier options for satisfying your sweet tooth? The list begins and ends with fresh fruit, which is loaded with naturally-occurring (as opposed to added) sugar, the way nature intended it. A serving of fresh berries, perhaps with a little Greek yogurt or a splash of fresh cream, has it all over soda!

PLAY HARDER
To get to where you want to go, don’t slow yourself down with sugary drinks. The caffeine and sugar soon wear off, leaving you feeling sluggish and drained of good energy.

LEARN EASIER
For kids to be able to learn at their best, they need to eat well. And too much sugar interferes with memory and other key learning functions. So even if that apple is for the teacher, maybe the student should skip the drinks and snacks with added sugar – and eat the apple instead! Teacher won’t mind!

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First things First
Over the last several school years, we’ve been putting in place a number of changes to make our meals even more nutritious for our customers. For instance, we’ve established calorie maximums for our meals, which helps us cut added sugar from our offerings!

Don’t 4 Get It
Take at least one fruit or veggie and at least three items total to your meal count to receive a complete lunch!