



Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Fact Sheet

The Problem:

- Average per capita consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is 46 gallons/year; that equals about 40 pounds of sugar.¹
- Sugar-sweetened beverages are the food group most strongly linked increased rates of obesity and risk for diabetes.²
- Sixty-one percent of adult New Yorkers report regularly consuming sugar-sweetened soft drinks; 22% of adults and 25% of adolescents report drinking at least one can or bottle per day of sweetened soft drink.³
- According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), per capita soft-drink consumption has increased almost 500 percent over the past 50 years.⁴
- People are often unaware of the number of calories and amount of sugar in sugar-sweetened beverages. A 20-ounce bottle of Coca Cola has more than 15 teaspoons of sugar and 240 calories, more than 10% of the average number of calories a person needs to consume in a day.⁵

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Hurt Kids:

- 1 in 4 children in New York State is obese.⁶
- Each additional 12-ounce soft drink consumed per day by children increases their odds of becoming obese by 60%.⁷
- A recent study found that consumption of sweetened beverages by youth, ages 2-18 years, increased from 87 kcal/day in 1977-1978 to 254 kcal/day in 2005-2006; a 75% increase.⁸
- Intake of sweetened beverages was the only dietary practice that was consistently linked to overweight in children.⁹
- Among young children, aged 1 through 5 years, consumption of sweetened, carbonated soft drinks was associated with an 80-100% increased risk of dental cavities.¹⁰
- Sweetened beverages such as soda are a discretionary item in the diet; they provide many calories but no essential nutrients.²

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Hurt Adults:

- Currently 25% of New York adults are obese and another 35% are overweight.²
- Obese and overweight adults were more likely to consume sodas than normal weight adults (33% and 29% vs. 24%, respectively).¹¹
- High soft drink consumption increases risk of diabetes by 83% in women.¹²
- A 2005 survey found that women who consumed one or more sodas per day were on average 0.7 BMI (Body Mass Index) units heavier than women who consumed less than one soda per day.¹¹
- A 4-year study of men and women in the Framingham Heart Study found that those who drank one or more sodas per day were 50% more likely to develop metabolic syndrome (a combination of risk factors, such as high waist circumference, high blood pressure, impaired fasting glucose or diabetes, that strongly predicts the likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease) than those who drank less than one soda per week.¹³

The Economic Impact:

- An estimated \$7.6 billion is spent annually on obesity-related health problems in New York.²
- Obesity costs each NYS household \$771 per year for public and private health care programs.²
- Because of the contribution of the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages to obesity, as well as the health consequences that are independent of weight, the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages generates excess health care costs.¹⁴

A Proposed Solution: New York's Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax:

- An excise tax of 1 cent per ounce on sugar-sweetened beverages has been proposed in NYS in 2010²
- The tax is expected to increase the price of sugar-sweetened soft drinks by 17% on average and reduce consumption by a minimum of 10 percent. The impact on youth is expected to be even higher.²
- Reducing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by 10 percent would save about 7,400 calories per year and could reduce yearly weight gain by 2 pounds.²
- The sugar-sweetened beverage excise tax will raise approximately \$450 million this year and \$1 billion when fully annualized in 2011-2012.²
- Revenue collected will go into the state's New York State Health Care Reform Act (HCRA) Resources Fund to support health related initiatives, such as health promotion, tobacco control, obesity and other chronic disease prevention programs²

Key Messages:

- Increasing the cost of sugar-sweetened beverages is a **WIN, WIN, WIN** for New York State
- **WIN 1 - Promotes health, especially among children** - The tax will decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, improve nutrition, and improve weight status and health.²
- **WIN 2 - Raises revenue for the state** - The tax will raise revenue to reduce cuts and support health initiatives.²
- **WIN 3 – Supported by the public** - A December 2008 poll found that more than half of adult New Yorkers support a sugar-sweetened beverage tax, and if the revenue is used to address the prevention of childhood and adult obesity, support increases to 72%.²

Interesting Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Facts:

- In 2008, Coca-Cola Company spent \$752,000,000 on advertising/marketing in the United States while PepsiCo spent \$1,294,000,000¹⁵
- Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest single source of added sweeteners in the US diet.²
- Soft drink intake is associated with lower intakes of milk, calcium and other nutrients.¹⁶
- A 75 pound child would need to bicycle vigorously for about 30 minutes to burn off the calories in a 12-ounce can of soda.¹⁷
- An average adult would need to walk 25 minutes at a moderate pace to burn off the extra calories in one 12-ounce can of soda, or 46 minutes to burn the calories in a 20-ounce soda.¹⁷

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