

# SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES FACT SHEET



## What are sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)?

Sugar-sweetened beverages are beverages that contain added sugars and include popular drinks such as:

- Soft drinks/soda pop/ soda
- Fruit drinks, punches, or “-ades”
- Sports drinks
- Tea and Coffee drinks
- Energy drinks
- Sweetened/Flavored milks

## What’s the problem with sugar-sweetened beverages?

- Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) including non-diet sodas, energy drinks, and fruit drinks have been associated with obesity, and obesity-related illnesses<sup>1,2, and 7</sup>
- Nevada has the second highest prevalence of fruit drink consumption among persons aged 18-34 years and is the highest prevalence of African-Americans and Hispanics who consume fruit-drinks on a regular basis<sup>3</sup>
- Children and adolescents are major consumers of sugar-sweetened beverages and this consumption has been associated with the rising levels of childhood obesity<sup>4,6 and,8</sup>
- Calories from liquid beverages contribute to weight gain at higher levels than solids foods do, and also lack comparable nutrient content when compared to calories consumed from solid foods<sup>5</sup>
- Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugar to the American diet<sup>9,10</sup>
- Several health conditions have been linked to consumption of excess SSB’s including diabetes, dental carries, and cardiovascular disease.<sup>10</sup>



## Do the math!

Divide sugar grams  
by 4 to get teaspoons

Example:  
a 12 ounce soda  
with 40 grams  
of sugar

**40 / 4 =**  
**10 teaspoons**  
**of sugar in ONE soda**

## Healthy Alternatives:

- Water: Try water infused with added citrus or sliced cucumbers.
- 100% Vegetable Juice: Packed with flavor; high in vitamins C, A, and potassium and around 50 calories per cup. If possible choose the low sodium versions.
- Non-fat or low-fat milk: High in calcium and protein—and you need both. You could also try soy milk, rice milk or almond milk.
- Light yogurt and fruit smoothie: Creamy and sweet, high in calcium and only about 170 calories per cup.
- Tea, unsweetened: Get a boost on less than five calories per cup, plus it’s high in antioxidants.

(continued)

For more information concerning sugar-sweetened beverages & to find other delicious drink recipes, please visit our website at:  
<http://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/eat-better/sugar-sweetened-beverages.php>

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are sugar-sweetened beverages?  
Sugar-sweetened beverages are beverages that have added sugar.
2. What kinds of drinks are considered sugar-sweetened beverages?  
Sodas, fruit-juice, sports drinks, tea & coffee drinks, energy drinks, and flavored milks.
3. How much sugar is usually in sugar sweetened beverages? Several of your favorite soft drinks and beverages contain up to 4 teaspoons or more of added sugar per serving.
4. What's the problem with SSBs?  
Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugar that people consume and are considered to be a top contributor to caloric caused obesity.  
- SSBs rarely have any nutritional value.
5. How do I cut back on my sugar intake?  
Rethink your drink! Try substituting your favorite soda, for a diet version or, better yet just skip the soda all together! Try water, or low-fat milk.
6. How are sugar-sweetened beverages impacting my child?  
- Studies have shown a positive correlation between sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and obesity and obesity-related illnesses.  
- The highest consumers of sugar-sweetened beverages are usually consumed by children and adolescents at the highest levels.

### References

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- <sup>2</sup> Caballero, Benjamin. "Focus on Sugar-sweetened Beverages." *Public Health Nutrition*. *Public Health Nutrition* 18.07 (2015): 1143-144.
- <sup>3</sup> Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a2.htm?s\\_cid=mm6332a2\\_e#Tab1](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a2.htm?s_cid=mm6332a2_e#Tab1).
- <sup>4</sup> Bremer, Andrew & Lustig, Robert. "Effects of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages on Children." *Pediatric Annals* 41.1 (2012): 26-30.
- <sup>5</sup> Morin, Karen. "Sugar-Sweetened Beverages: Why the Fuss?" *MCN, The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* 38(3): 185.
- <sup>6</sup> Wang, J., Mark, S., Henderson, M., O'Loughlin, J., Tremblay, A., Wortman, J., Paradis, G., Gray-Donald, K., "Adiposity and glucose intolerance exacerbate components of metabolic syndrome in children consuming sugar-sweetened beverages: QUALITY cohort study." *Pediatric Obesity. Special Issue: Dietary Sugars and Obesity in Children* (2013) 8(4): 284-293.
- <sup>7</sup> Malik VS, Popkin BM, Bray GA, Després JP, Hu FB. Sugar-sweetened beverages, obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and cardiovascular disease risk. *Circulation*. 2010;121:1356-1364. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.876185.
- <sup>8</sup> Keller, A. and Torre, S. "Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Obesity among Children and Adolescents A review of Systematic Literature Reviews." *Journal of Childhood Obesity*(2015). 11(4):
- <sup>9</sup> What We Eat In America (WWEIA) Food Category Analyses for the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Estimates based on day 1 dietary recalls from WWEIA, NHANES 2009-2010.
- <sup>10</sup> The CDC guide to Strategies for Reducing the Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages. *Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Guide*. March 2010.

