Fast Facts on Sugary Drinks

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Excess Sugar

A 20-ounce bottle of soda contains the equivalent of approximately 16 teaspoons of sugar.[1]

The American Heart Association recommends that Americans consume no more than five to nine teaspoons of sugar per day. [2]

Sugar sweetened beverages are the single largest source of added sugars in the American diet, [3] with the average American drinking nearly 42 gallons of sweetened beverages a year, the equivalent of 39 pounds of extra sugar every year. [4]

Excess Calories

Calories from sugar-sweetened beverages add to the calories people consume because they do not satisfy hunger the way calories from solid food or protein beverages do. [5]

Between 1977 and 2001 Americans' daily calorie consumption increased by 250-300 calories, [6] nearly half of which (43%) came from sugary drinks alone. [7]

Soda and other sugary beverage consumption has more than doubled over the past thirty years to an all-time high of 7% of daily calories, making it the single largest contributor to daily caloric intake in the United States. [8, 9]

Link to Diabetes

Over the past 30 years, adult diabetes rates have nearly tripled,[10] In the same period, soda consumption doubled.[11]

One in three children born today, including half of Latino and African-American children, are expected to develop diabetes in their lifetime.[12]

We absorb liquid sugar in as little as 30 minutes, much faster than a candy bar, leading to a spike in blood sugar that the body is not well equipped to handle, particularly in repetition.[13] These spikes in blood sugar can overwhelm the body and lead to the transformation of sugar into fat in the liver, which contributes directly to the development of diabetes.[14]

After six months, daily consumption of sugary drinks increases fat deposits in the liver by 150 percent, which directly contribute to both diabetes and heart disease.[15]

Individuals who drink one to two sugar-sweetened beverages per day have a 26 percent higher risk for developing type II diabetes. [16]

According to the American Diabetes Association, persons with Type 1 and 2 diabetes should limit or avoid consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. [17]

Complications of diabetes include: heart disease, nerve damage, gum infections, kidney disease, hearing impairment, blindness, amputation of toes, feet or legs, and increased risk of Alzheimer's Disease. [18]

Link to Obesity

Obesity in the United States has increased dramatically over the past 30 years. [19]

More than one-third of U.S. adults (35.7%) are obese. [20]

There is overwhelming evidence of the link between obesity and the consumption of sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks, energy drinks, sweet teas, and sports drinks. [21]

Obesity increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, and certain types of cancer. [22]

Depending on their level of obesity, 60 to 80 percent of obese adults currently suffer from type 2 diabetes, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, or other related conditions. [23]

Adults who drink one soda or more daily are 27% more likely to be overweight or obese. [24]

Among children, those who drink one or more sugar-sweetened beverages per day have 55% greater odds of being overweight or obese. [25]

Additional Health Problems

Children who frequently consume beverages high in sugar are at increased risk for dental caries. Untreated dental caries can lead to pain, infection, tooth loss, and in severe cases, death. [26]

Obese children are more likely to suffer from health problems including: asthma, headaches, ear infections, depression, joint and muscle problems and developmental delays. [27]

Increased Health Care Costs

Medical costs for people who are obese are dramatically higher than those of normal weight. [28]

Overweight and obesity account for $147 billion in health care costs nationally, or 9 percent of all medical spending – with half these costs paid publicly through the Medicare and Medicaid programs. [29]

Diabetes cost the United States an estimated $245 billion in 2012, with $176 billion in direct medical costs and $69 billion in indirect costs (e.g. lost productivity, disability and premature death). [30]

Average medical expenditures for people with diabetes are 2.3 times higher than for those without diabetes.[31]

In 2007, the average annual treatment cost per case for diagnosed diabetes in the U.S. was nearly $10,000. Every person, even those unaffected by the disease, is estimated to pay a "hidden diabetes tax" of over $700, through higher insurance premiums.[32]

In California, a third of all hospitalizations in 2011 involved patients with a diabetes diagnosis. Hospital charges totaled $35 billion – of that, an estimated $17.3 billion was spent on patients with diabetes.[33]

In California, the average hospital stay for a diabetic patient cost $2,200 more than stays for patients without diabetes, and a majority of these hospitalizations were paid for by public insurance.[34]

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