



Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Fact Sheet: Flavored or Enhanced Waters

The term “sugar-sweetened beverages” is most often associated with traditional carbonated drinks. However, this category of beverages has expanded substantially and now includes, among others, beverages known as flavored, enhanced, or vitamin water. Recent legislation calling for a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages has included these drinks in the taxable category, but people may question their inclusion, believing that flavored waters are a healthful addition to the diet. This fact sheet gives the rationale for including flavored waters in the sugar-sweetened beverage category.

What are flavored waters?

Flavored waters are sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) that contain any variety of added ingredients, including fruit and other flavorings, herbs, vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants, sodium, protein, fiber, and caffeine. While marketed mostly for enhancing health and well-being, they are also marketed as a sports drink. Some versions contain no calories and would not be taxed.

How much sugar is in these beverages?

Some of the more popular brands have between 6-8 teaspoons (90-120 calories) per 20-ounce bottle.

Why include flavored waters in the definition of sugar-sweetened beverages?

- There is little direct clinical evidence to support the potential health benefit of enhanced waters.ⁱ
- With two-thirds of the US adult population and one-third of children overweight or obese, it is important to obtain adequate vitamins and/or minerals in foods and beverages *with fewer calories*.ⁱⁱ
- The USDA and the American Heart Association recommend that people reduce their consumption of added sugars to no more than 100 calories per day for women, and 150 calories per day for men.ⁱⁱⁱ Consuming sweetened waters, when plain water will suffice, would use up those discretionary calories.
- Sugar in liquid form may be less filling than sugar in solid form. Therefore, people may not compensate for the calories they’ve consumed from SSBs by eating fewer calories during the day.^{iv}
- There is consistent advice from professional organizations to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.^v

Consumption trends

- While sales in the US of bottled water fell by 1% in 2008, flavored and enhanced water sales grew by 8% in the same time period.^{vi}
- Total US consumption of flavored water grew from 418 million gallons per year in 2006, to 460 million gallons in 2009.^{vii}

Brand names (partial list)

- Pepsi brands
 - Aquafina FlavorSplash; Aquafina Plus; Propel; SoBe Lifewater
- Coca-Cola brands
 - Dasani Flavors; Glaceau Fruitwater; Smartwater; Vitaminwater
- Clearly Canadian brands
 - Daily Vitamin; Energy

Talking points for use in campaigns to reduce SSB consumption

- Flavored water adds unnecessary calories to the diet; plain water is best for quenching thirst.
- People do not compensate well for excess calories they consume in SSBs.
- Added sugar in our food and drink is a major contributor to weight gain.
- Flavored waters may be marketed aggressively as promoting health.

ⁱKalman, D.S. et al. (2009). A pilot trial comparing the availability of vitamins C, B6, and B12 from a vitamin-fortified water and food source in humans. *Intl J Food Sci & Nut*, 60, 114-124.

ⁱⁱIbid.

ⁱⁱⁱJohnson, R.K. et al. (2009). Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health. A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*, 120, 1011-1020.

^{iv}Brownell, K.D. et al. (2009). The public health and economic benefits of taxing sugar-sweetened beverages. *N Engl J Med*, 361, 1599-1605.

^vRudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Yale University. Sugar-sweetened beverage taxes and sugar intake: Policy statements, endorsements and recommendations. Retrieved 10/ 2010, from

http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/policy/SSBTaxes/SSBTaxStatements_7.10.pdf

^{vi}Montague-Jones, G. Latest figures reveal opportunities in weak bottled water market. *Beverage Daily.Com*. Retrieved 9/14/10, from

<http://www.beveragedaily.com/Markets/Latest-figures-reveal-opportunities-in-weak-bottled-water-market>

^{vii}Beverage World. *State of the Industry '07*. Chicago: Beverage World, 2007; Beverage World. *State of the Industry '08*. Chicago: Beverage World, 2008; Beverage World. *State of the Industry '09*. Chicago: Beverage World, 2009; Beverage World. *State of the Industry 2010. Liquid Refreshment Beverages*. Chicago: Beverage World, 2010.

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