**Alaska Obesity Facts: Sugary Drinks**

**WHAT IS A SUGARY DRINK?**

Sugary drinks\(^1\) are made with sugar, high fructose corn syrup, honey or other sweeteners that contain calories and include:

- Soft drinks, soda, pop, and soda pop
- Fruit drinks, punches, or ades
- Sports drinks
- Tea and coffee drinks with added sugar.
- Energy drinks
- Sweetened milks or milk alternatives

**SUGARY DRINKS ARE A PROBLEM**

- High consumption of sugary drinks is associated with obesity and negative health conditions, including diabetes\(^2\) and cavities.\(^3\)
- Reduction of sugary drink intake can lead to weight loss.\(^4\)
- Sugary Drinks:
  - provide 36% of added sugar in the American diet;\(^5\)
  - are the largest source of added sugar\(^6\) in the diet of U.S. youth;
  - provide “empty calories,” with little or no nutritional value; and
  - are a substantial contributor of calories in the U.S. diet.\(^5\)

**SUGARY DRINK CONSUMPTION BY ALASKANS**

- 31% of three-year olds\(^7\) 45% of high school students,\(^8\) and 40% of adults\(^9\) in Alaska drink one or more sugary drinks per day; 23% of Alaska Adults consume two or more daily.\(^9\)
- Adults in rural Alaska are more likely to consume one or more sugary drinks daily (63%) than adults in other regions of the state; the Municipality of Anchorage, at 44%, is second. The lowest prevalence of drinking one or more sugary drinks daily is in the Gulf Coast and Southeast regions (34% each).\(^9\)

**PREVALENCE OF DRINKING ONE OR MORE CANS/GLASSES SUGARY DRINKS DAILY, BY RACE, ALASKA ADULTS, 2011**

![Bar chart showing prevalence of sugary drinks consumption by race.](chart1)

**SOURCES: ALASKA BRFSS**

- Alaska Natives are significantly more likely (60%) than Whites (32%) or those of other races (36%) to consume one or more sugary drink each day.\(^9\)

**High School Students**

- Alaska Native high school students are more likely (60%) than White students (39%), or those of other races (40%), to consume one or more sugary drinks each day.\(^8\)
- Boys are more likely (62%) than girls (39%) to consume one or more sugary drinks each day.\(^8\)

**Young Children**

- Three-year-olds living in the Northern (75%) and Southwest (73%) regions of the state are more likely than those living in the other regions (ranging from 21% to 32%) to drink any amount of sugary drinks on a given day.\(^7\)

**ANY CONSUMPTION OF SUGARY DRINKS BY 3-YEAR-OLDS ON A GIVEN DAY, BY REGION, ALASKA 2010-2011**

![Bar chart showing consumption of sugary drinks by region.](chart2)

**SOURCE: ALASKA CUBS**
Alaska Obesity Facts: Ways to Decrease Sugary Drink Consumption

What Can Alaska Schools Worksites & Communities Do?

- Ensure ready access to potable drinking water.
- Promote access to and consumption of healthy alternatives to sugary drinks.
- Limit marketing of and access to sugary drinks.
- Educate the public about healthy beverage choices.

What Can Health Care Providers Do?

- Include screening and counseling on sugary drink intake as part of routine medical and dental care.

What Can Individuals Do?

- Drink or serve water, low-fat (1%) milk, or zero-calorie beverages instead of sugary drinks.
- Check the Nutrition Facts label to know the number of servings included in each can, bottle, or cup.
- Compare grams of sugar between different beverages by checking the Nutrition Facts Label.

SUGARY DRINKS ARE THE THIRD LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR OF CALORIES IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT DIETS; PROVIDING AN AVERAGE OF 118 CALORIES EACH DAY. 5

36% OF ADDED SUGAR IN THE AMERICAN DIET COMES FROM SUGARY DRINKS. 5

REFERENCES