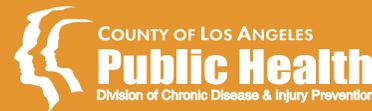


# Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in Los Angeles County



Much like the obesity epidemic, consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) by both children and adults has increased over the past 30 years in the United States (U.S.).<sup>1-3</sup> During 2005-2008, approximately one-half of the U.S. population reported consuming SSBs on any given day.<sup>1</sup> Overall, U.S. males consumed an average of 175 calories per day from these sugar drinks, while U.S. females consumed 94 calories.<sup>1</sup> According to the Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS, 2007), more than 43% of children ages 17 years or younger consume at least one SSB on an average day.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, among adults in the county, more than 38% consume at least one SSB a day (Table 1). The American Heart Association currently recommends a consumption goal of no more than 450 calories from sugary drinks per **week** — this is fewer than **three** 12-oz. cans of carbonated soda.<sup>5</sup>

## Prevalence of Child and Adult Obesity in Los Angeles County

In Los Angeles County, the prevalence of obesity among 5th, 7th, and 9th graders has increased from 19% in 1999 to 23% in 2007.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the prevalence of obesity among adults has increased by nearly 8% during the past ten years, from 14% in 1997 to 22% in 2007.<sup>4</sup> Emerging evidence suggests that high consumption of SSBs may be linked to obesity and related chronic conditions, including heart disease, stroke, hypertension, some forms of cancer, and type 2 diabetes.<sup>7,8</sup>

## High Consumption of SSBs is Particularly Common Among At-Risk Groups in the County

- More than **one-third** of high school students drink at least 4 sodas per week.<sup>9</sup>
- Adult males are nearly twice as likely to consume at least one SSB a day, as compared to females (50% vs. 28%; Table 1).<sup>4</sup>
- Obese adults are more likely to consume SSBs at least once a day than normal (non-obese) adults (50% vs. 33%).<sup>4</sup>
- Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, more than 50% of Latinos and nearly one-half African-Americans reported drinking one or more SSBs on an average day.<sup>4</sup>
- More than 75% of adults support putting restrictions on advertising to children about sugary drinks, cereals, candy, and fast food.<sup>4</sup>

## Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSBs)

Sugar-sweetened beverages, also known as sugar-loaded drinks, include all sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, low-calorie drinks and other beverages that contain added caloric sweeteners, such as sweetened tea, rice drinks, bean beverages, sugar cane beverages, horchata and nonalcoholic wines/malt beverages.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1. Percent of adults (18+ years old) who, on average, drink at least one soda or sweetened drink per day, Los Angeles County Health Survey, 2007.<sup>4</sup>**

Drink 1+ Soda(s) a Day	Percent (%)	Estimated #
<b>LA County</b>	38.8	2,889,000
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	49.9	1,811,000
Female	28.3	1,078,000
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	70.8	547,000
25-29	44.8	345,000
30-39	46.2	722,000
40-49	37.2	641,000
50-59	30.1	322,000
60-64	21.0	116,000
65+	19.9	197,000
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Latino	51.2	1,611,000
White	27.5	704,000
African-American	48.0	309,000
Asian/Pacific Islander	24.1	235,000
American Indian	49.5	12,000
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	53.5	850,000
High school	42.1	547,000
Some college or trade school	40.8	734,000
College or post-graduate	27.4	736,000
<b>Federal Poverty Level (FPL)</b>		
0-99% FPL	52.2	905,000
100-199% FPL	45.0	736,000
200-299% FPL	40.9	435,000
300% or above FPL	27.1	812,000
<b>Weight Status</b>		
Underweight/Normal	32.6	880,000
Overweight	37.7	925,000
Obese	50.1	723,000

Source: 2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey; Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.  
\*Note: Estimates are based on self-reported data by a random sub-sample of 1,040 Los Angeles County adults. Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is based on U.S. Census 2006 thresholds.

## In Los Angeles County:

- 13,890 adults died from coronary heart disease, 7,243 died from diabetes, and 3,323 died from stroke in 2007.<sup>13</sup>
- More than 14,000 hospitalizations in 2009 were due to coronary heart disease; 16,230 were due to diabetes and 17,463 were due to stroke.<sup>14</sup>
- Treatment costs for diabetes are estimated at \$6.4 billion per year.<sup>15</sup>
- Health care costs and lost productivity associated with overweight and obesity totaled \$3.5 billion and \$2.3 billion, respectively, in 2006.<sup>16</sup>

### What individuals can do<sup>11</sup>

- Choose water or low-calorie drinks instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Carry a water bottle and refill it throughout the day.
- Avoid filling the refrigerator with sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Make water more enticing by adding slices of lemon, lime, cucumber, strawberries, or watermelon.
- Drink sparkling water or add a splash of 100% juice to it for some extra flavor.
- Serve water, unsweetened coffee or tea, or low-fat or non-fat milk with meals.
- When choosing a sugar-sweetened beverage, get the smaller size to minimize your intake. Some companies are now selling 8-oz. cans and bottles of soda, which contain about 100 calories.
- Be a role model for your children, family, and friends by choosing healthy drinks.

### What your organization can do<sup>12</sup>

- Serve drinks with no more than 25 calories per 8-oz. serving (water, diet sodas, coffee and unsweetened tea) at office functions, including meetings, conferences and parties.
- Fill on-site vending machines with beverages that have no more than 25 calories per 8-oz. serving or allow only the bottom two slots for higher-calorie drinks.
- Reduce availability of SSBs in cafeterias and snack shops. Replace them with water or low-calorie/sugar-free beverages (no more than 25 calories per 8-oz. serving).
- Consider selling water and low-calorie beverages at a lower price (if feasible) than sugary drinks.
- Encourage water consumption in the office.



## RENEW LOS ANGELES COUNTY

### Local Action in Los Angeles County

### Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise, and Wellness

The \$16 million CDC-funded Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise, and Wellness initiative (RENEW LA County) is a two-year, multi-sector program that promotes physical activity and healthy eating among children and adults through policy, system, and environmental changes in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County was one of 50 communities selected to participate in the national *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* program. This effort is supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

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For additional information about sugar-sweetened beverages, visit:  
[www.choosehealthla.com/eat-healthy/sugar-loaded-beverages](http://www.choosehealthla.com/eat-healthy/sugar-loaded-beverages)



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