

Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes and Sugar Intake: Policy Statements, Endorsements, and Recommendations

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Click on the organization name to link to its statement.

Acknowledgement of Taxes as a Public Health Strategy

[American Medical Association](#) Policy Statement, June 2012.

Taxes on beverages with added sweeteners are one means by which consumer education campaigns and other obesity-related programs could be financed in a stepwise approach to addressing the obesity epidemic....Where taxes on beverages with added sweeteners are implemented, the revenue should be used primarily for programs to prevent and/or treat obesity and related conditions....

Policy Statement/Resolution in Support of Taxes

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#) Obesity/Advocacy Policy: Change Relative Price. See bottom of web page.

Implement a tax strategy to discourage consumption of food and beverages with minimal nutritional value, including a soda tax.

[US Conference of Mayors](#) 2008 Adopted Resolutions in Support of Funding Obesity Prevention.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the US Conference of Mayors supports increased resources for cities to help combat obesity and fund obesity prevention, including consideration of revenues from the major leading contributors of the nation's obesity epidemic, including calorically sweetened beverages, fast food and high calorie snacks.

Reports Recommending Taxes

[Bipartisan Policy Center](#) Restoring America's Future. Reviving the Economy, Cutting Spending and Debt, and Creating a Simple, Pro-Growth Tax System. November 2010, pp. 69-71.

Introduce an excise tax on the manufacture and importation of beverages sweetened with sugar or high-fructose corn syrup (non-diet soft drinks, sweetened fruit drinks, etc.) to reduce obesity-related healthcare costs.

[Brookings Institution](#) Bending the Curve. Effective Steps to Address Long-Term Health Care Spending Growth. August 2009, pg. 7.

Target obesity reduction through price incentives, such as sugar-sweetened beverage taxes, and through aggressive piloting and evaluation of other reforms that are designed to improve the evidence base of reforms that demonstrably reduce obesity — for example, community-, school-, and work-site interventions.

[Children Now, Oral Health Access Council. Oral Health and Obesity Policy Brief.](#) Childhood Obesity and Dental Disease: Common Causes, Common Solutions. February 2011.

Promising interventions address both issues: A tax would help reduce overall consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and raise significant revenue to fund health prevention and treatment efforts for California children.

Institute of Medicine of the National Academies

- Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity. Report Brief. September 2009, p.5.

Implement a tax strategy to discourage consumption of foods and beverages that have minimal nutritional value, such as sugar-sweetened beverages.

- Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention. Solving the Weight of the Nation. [Report Recommendations](#). May 2012, p.2.

...implementing fiscal policies aimed at reducing overconsumption of sugar-sweetened beverages through (1) pricing and other incentives to make healthier beverage options recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans more affordable and, for governments, (2) substantial and specific excise taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages (for example, cents per ounce of liquid, cents per teaspoon of added sugar), with the revenues being dedicated to obesity prevention programs....

United Nations Report submitted by Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, December 2011, pp.17, 21.

The introduction of food taxes and subsidies to promote a healthy diet constitutes a cost-effective and low-cost population-wide intervention that can have a significant impact. The report suggests that states impose taxes on soft drinks (sodas) and on foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, sodium and sugar, in order to subsidize access to fruits and vegetables and educational campaigns on healthy diets.

Urban Institute Reducing Obesity: Policy Strategies from the Tobacco Wars. July 2009, p. 19. Includes discussion of *...strategies that seem particularly promising in their potential impact...namely, excise or sales taxes on fattening food....*

Vermont Attorney General's Report Vermont Healthy Weight Initiative. November 2010, p. 2. *An excise tax of not less than \$.01 per ounce of SSB should be imposed to generate revenues for healthy weight initiatives and to substantially reduce the consumption of SSBs.*

Endorsements of Tax

During the health care debate of 2009-2010, a number of organizations endorsed a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in a June 2009 letter to Senator Max Baucus, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. The text of the letter may be found [here](#). Its signatories include:

- American Public Health Association
- American Society of Bariatric Physicians
- Black Women's Health Imperative
- California Center for Public Health Advocacy
- California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Citizens' Committee for Children
- Consumers Union
- Fitness Forward
- Oral Health America
- Partnership for Prevention
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine
- Prevention Institute
- Shape Up America!
- UC Berkeley's Center for Health and Public Policy Studies

Recommendations to Continue Research On, or Consideration of, Taxes

[American Cancer Society](#) Testimony in Support of Requiring Calorie Labeling in Certain Chain Restaurants. January 22, 2010, p.2.

Utilizing lessons learned in tobacco, strategies such as...taxing sugared beverages, should be part of a comprehensive approach to address obesity and the many factors contributing to the problem....With respect to the sugar beverage tax, the state should proceed cautiously and evaluate the impact carefully....

[American Heart Association](#) Position Statement on Beverage Taxes and Obesity Prevention, p. 3
The American Heart Association supports additional research to determine the efficacy of taxation policy on consumption trends, public health, the alternative choices consumers would make if they move away from sugar-sweetened beverages, the impact of these policies on disparate populations, and whether there are any unforeseen unintended consequences....

[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes and Public Health. A Research Brief, July 2009, p. 2.

The potential of significant SSB [sugar-sweetened beverage] taxes to reduce obesity rates is supported by a number of studies....However, additional research is needed to fully determine the net impact of changes in SSB prices on overall caloric intake....

[White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity](#) Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity within a Generation. May 2010, p. 56.

State and local sales taxes imposed on soft drinks, candy, and snacks raise their cost relative to other food purchases....The potential influence of food prices on consumption necessitates consideration of the extent to which changes in farm, tax, and subsidy policies might affect consumption patterns.

Recommendations to Decrease Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#) Policy Statement. Dietary Recommendations for Children and Adolescents: A Guide for Practitioners. *Pediatrics*. February 2006: 117(2), pp. 544-559. [Statement on Table 1.]

Reduce the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and foods.

[American Academy of Pediatrics Clinical Report](#). Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks for Children and Adolescents: Are They Appropriate? *Pediatrics*. May 2011.

Guidance for pediatricians:

- *Understand that energy drinks pose potential health risks primarily because of stimulant content; therefore, they are not appropriate for children and adolescents and should never be consumed.*
- *Counsel that routine ingestion of carbohydrate-containing sports drinks by children and adolescents should be avoided or restricted. Intake can lead to excessive caloric consumption and an increased risk of overweight and obesity as well as dental erosion.*

[American Medical Association](#) Childhood Obesity Policy and Guidelines.

Limit sugar-sweetened beverages.

[American Medical Athletic Association](#) Fluid recommendations to stay safe in the heat.

During activity, avoid drinks with caffeine, high sugar content, alcohol or other carbonation because...fruit juices or soft drinks are high in sugar that slows fluid absorption by the body....

[Centers for Disease Control](#) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States. July 2009, Recommendation #10.

Communities should discourage consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

[Institute of Medicine of the National Academies](#). Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity. Report Brief. September 2009, p.5.

Strategy 7: Increase access to free, safe drinking water in public places to encourage water consumption instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

[National Association of County and City Health Officials](#). Statement of Policy, Comprehensive Obesity Prevention. #10-01.

Local governments and recreation facilities should increase access to safe, free drinking water in public places to encourage consumption of water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

[National Association of Local Boards of Health](#). Position Statement: Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity, January 2010, p. 2.

Partner with administrators to eliminate availability of sugar-sweetened beverages and high-calorie/low-nutrition snacks in schools and child care centers.

[USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010](#). Report of the Advisory Committee, 2010. Part B., Section 1, p. B3-2.

Reduce the incidence and prevalence of overweight and obesity of the US population by reducing overall calorie intake and increasing physical activity....To achieve this, Americans should...avoid sugar-sweetened beverages....

Recommendations to Decrease Sugar Consumption

[American Heart Association](#) Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2009, p.1.

...the American Heart Association recommends reductions in the intake of added sugars.

[World Health Organization](#). Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. May 2004, p.4.

*For diet, recommendations for populations and individuals should include the following:
...limit the intake of free sugars.*

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