

Support the Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax for Children's Health

More than one out of every three children in New York faces a lifetime of poor health outcomes because of the obesity epidemic.

Think about it.

One out of three children. Because of the obesity epidemic, children actually live in a generation that may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

Research now links drinking sugared beverages with obesity as well as with other health problems. In fact, numerous studies have shown that an increase in the consumption of sugared beverages or soda is associated with increased weight gain and obesity. These items – sweetened soda, sports drinks, and flavored waters – are not necessary for a child's diet and provide no nutritional value.

Children begin drinking sugared beverages at a very young age with over half of toddlers consuming these drinks at least once a day. Sugar sweetened beverages are responsible for a large proportion of added sugar in our diet – as much as 7% of all our calories. Just one 20 ounce soda contains over 250 calories and more than 16 teaspoons of sugar. Imagine – kids are getting the equivalent of 10-20 teaspoons of refined sugar a day through these drinks. That is a large percentage of the calories just in refined sugar.

Dental disease is another health problem associated with high sugar diets. Sugary beverages increase dental disease because sugar promotes harmful bacteria in the mouth and the acid corrodes the enamel. Since dental decay is the single most prevalent chronic childhood disease, any efforts to reduce sugar consumption will help prevent painful cavities.

Right now public health and health care advocates as well as consumer groups are working with the New York State Department of Health to get the word out on the proposed tax on sugared beverages. This tax of one penny per ounce is expected to reduce consumption by 10% and would help people think more carefully about their beverage choices. This is the same fundamental public health policy approach that has been so successful in reducing tobacco use.

Additionally, this tax will raise \$1 billion a year to support health care and health-related programs. That money must be used to offset what would otherwise be cuts in health care spending. Steep reductions in health care and public health spending would mean fewer resources to keep children healthy, in school and ready to learn. Raising revenue in this way benefits the programs that are important to children's health and improves the health of New Yorkers.

As the time nears for the passage of the state budget, things are heating up. The beverage industry and anti-tax groups are putting out deceptive ads designed to confuse consumers about the proposal and the link between sugar sweetened beverages and obesity. The proposed tax will improve children's health outcomes by reducing the consumption of sweetened beverages while supporting important health programs.

GET THE FACTS! You can help educate your community about the tax, about the link to obesity and health conditions and the impact the tax will have to support health care in your

area through the [Sugar Sweetened Beverages Toolkit](#) produced by the New York Academy of Medicine at their website: www.sugarsweetenedbeverages.org.

Please [sign on as a supporter](#) and get involved. Encourage others to get involved. This fight is about making sure children have a healthy future.

The New York State Department of Health also has great resources about the [impact of sugared beverages on obesity](#) as well as [press releases](#) and [obesity statistics](#). You can even watch a [You Tube video](#) of New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Richard Daines talking about the proposal.

Help spread the word about the importance of this proposal for children's health. It is a step in the right direction for children's health.