

USA: SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES-INFLUENCE TOWARDS PUBLIC HEALTH (2024)

Introduction

Topping the bill of sugar sweeteners brings forth sugar-sweetened beverages that introduce additional sugar to the American diet; therefore, they are also major contributors to higher calorific intake combined with other factors leading to chronic diseases. They include sodas, energy drinks, flavored waters, assorted fruit drinks, sweetened teas, and coffees. There is an association between the consumption of all SSBs and obesity, diabetes, and other metabolic diseases. Due to their liquid form, SSBs are rapidly absorbed, go almost unrecognized by the body's satiety signals, thus promoting excess energy intake, storage of fat, and ultimately weight gain. Besides, rapid entry of glucose from SSBs balances high insulin production, furthering the accumulation of visceral fat, insulin resistance, and various other metabolic derangements.

SSBs, albeit with their very much acknowledged health risks, still form a stronghold in the American dietary pattern. This factsheet considers the public health implications, regulations, and worthwhile measures to reduce its consumption. [1]. [2].



Heightened Concerns on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are a major source of added sugars in the American diet, contributing almost 50% to total sugar intake. The average American consumes over 150 calories per day from sugary drinks, according to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); this quantity is well above the recommended level of sugar intake. There is compelling clinical evidence that SSB consumption is growing while the obesity rates are also on the rise. Among children and adolescents, SSBs contribute somewhere between 10% and 15% of energy intake per day and are the leading source of added sugars from their diet. Alarming, about 25% of U.S. adolescents consume SSBs in amounts exceeding 750 mL per day, which is further associated with excess calorie intake of more than 350. [3].





SSB health risk essentials

Obesity and Weight Gain:

SSBs increase the excessive intake of calories without providing any essential nutrients; hence they are risking obesity addition. Studies suggest that sugary drinks taken daily increase the risk of obesity by 26% in both children and adults. Some research further postulates that SSBs may promote weight gain over and above their calorie content owing to its peculiar metabolic behavior.



Type 2 Diabetes:

Increased intake of SSBs is also associated with increased insulin resistance and therefore increased chances of getting Type 2 diabetes. Daily consumption of one or more sugary beverages raises the risk of diabetes by 20%. In another study, the risk was elevated by 83% among women consuming one or more SSBs per day as against those who consume them infrequently.

Heart Disease and Hypertension:

SSBs are associated with excess sugar, which leads to hypertension, inflammation, and the risk of heart disease. There is evidence demonstrating that the intake of more than one sugary drink per day was associated with a 30% greater risk of cardiovascular diseases. The risk of heart diseases in women drinking two or more SSBs daily is 35%, adjusted for lifestyle factors. The intake of SSBs, even at moderate levels, can increase harmful LDL cholesterol levels, resulting in the aggravation of plaque formation in arteries.



Dental Decay and Issues of Oral Health:

The high sugar content in SSBs fosters bacterial growth in the mouth, causing cavities and erosion of enamel. Children and adolescents who frequently consume sugary drinks are at greater risk of early tooth decay.

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Historical and Social Health-Related Responses in the United States

Tax Soda and Price Policies

Cities in the USA such as Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle have levied sugar tax to cut down on consumption of SSB. Research indicates that these taxes brought an important decline between 15-20% in sales for sugary drinks, urging consumers



Labeling and Consumer Awareness

Under FDA guidelines, the packaged beverage must provide added sugar labeling, which enables the consumer to make informed choices. In addition to this, front-of-package warning labels have been readied along with public health awareness campaigns highlighting the harm of intake of too much sugar.

Policies in Schools and Workplaces

A whole lot of schools and workplaces have gone towards removing SSBs from vending machines and cafeterias and introducing them with healthier options—in fact water, herbal and unsweetened teas and low-calorie drinks.



Industry Reformulation and Low Sugar Alternatives

Concerns raised by the public on health advised beverage companies to cut off sugar in their products and promote diet soda, unsweetened beverages, and fortified drinks. The tendency of rise of plant-based sweeteners like that of stevia and monk fruit also presents a promise of keeping low-calorie options without sacrificing taste.

Consumer Trends and Shifts in Beverage Choices

The demand for function-based beverages has increased in the last year. Things such as kombucha, probiotics, and plant-based milks are those that hydrating options entice consumers to seek for. Soaring sales of sparkling waters and unsweetened flavored beverages were at the cost of reduced soda sales. [6] [7].



Strategies of Reducing SSB Consumption

Consumer Education Regarding Health Risks

Mass public awareness campaigns should concentrate on the long-term health impacts of sugar intake in excess. Nutrition labels should be clearer and easier to understand direct healthier choices.



Promote Healthier Alternatives

These may include infused water, herbal teas, and those naturally flavored. Affordable, accessible, and appealing non-sugary options should be prioritized by schools and workplaces.

Government and Policy Support

Another approach will be expanding sugar taxes into every region in the country and subsidizing healthier beverages at the same time. Research and innovations in low-sugar beverage formulations should be continued to also promote the health of consumers. [8]. [9].



Conclusion: The Food Research Lab in Healthier Beverage Development

Innovation in product formulation is needed, as consumers continue to demand healthier, lower-sugar alternatives on the beverage side. FRL plays a major role in the development of low-calorie, functional, and fortified beverages - in line with consumer health trends - at the leading edge of food science. It helps brands to maintain great taste while using less sugar, thus, ensuring that its products comply with regulatory standards. By incorporating the latest research in sweetener alternatives and functional ingredients, FRL supports the next generation of healthier beverages in the healthy food industry dynamic and towards sustainability.

