

YOUTH CONSUMPTION OF SUGARY DRINKS IN KING COUNTY

- ▶ **31% of King County high school students - or 26,000 youth - drink soda daily.**
- ▶ **Approximately 8,000 King County high school students drink two or more sodas per day.**
- ▶ **2 out of 3 King County middle and high school students report drinking sugary drinks, including sodas, sports drinks or other flavored sweetened drinks, at school.**

What are sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks are beverages with added sugars, such as regular sodas (or “pop”), energy drinks, sports drinks, sweetened fruit drinks, and sweetened coffees and teas. On average, a 20-ounce bottle of regular soda has more than 16 teaspoons of sugar and 240 calories. This is double the total amount of added sugar allowed for an entire day based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Reducing sugary drink consumption is a key strategy for improving health

Sugary drinks are the largest single source of calories in the U.S. diet and account for almost half of all added sugars that Americans consume.^{1,2,3} The consumption of sugary drinks has been linked to risks for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and hypertension.^{4,5,6,7,8} Because one in five youth in King County is overweight or obese, reducing the amount of sugary drinks young people consume is a key strategy for improving health.

For thousands of local youth, soda is part of daily diet

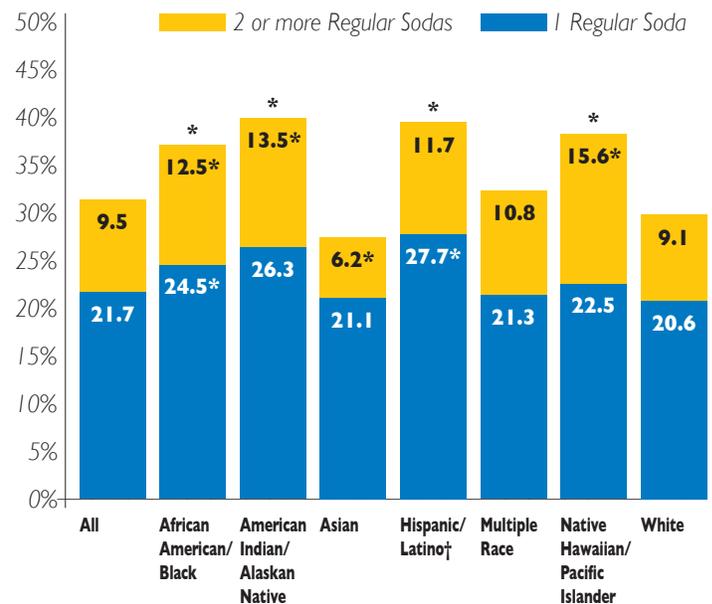
- ▶ Similar to rates seen nationally, 31% of King County high school students – or 26,000 youth – report drinking at least one regular (non-diet) soda daily. These numbers reflect only soda consumption – they do not capture the growing number of sports drinks, fruit drinks, vitamin waters and energy drinks that are increasing in popularity.
- ▶ Of the 26,000 King County high school students who drink soda daily, about 8,000 students are drinking two or more sodas. A teenager who drinks two 20-ounce regular colas per day consumes 4.7 cups of sugar per week – or 243 cups of sugar per year – from soda alone.
- ▶ Among high school students, daily consumption of at least one soda is highest among American Indian/Alaskan Native

youth (40%), Hispanic/Latino youth (39%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth (38%) and African American youth (37%) versus 30% for white, non-Hispanic youth (Figure 1).

- ▶ Consumption prevalence for Asians and whites is very similar, but higher numbers of white students drink two or more sodas daily. Multiracial students have similar consumption patterns to white, non-Hispanic students.

Figure 1:

Percent of High School Youth Consuming Regular Soda on Previous Day – King County (2010)



Data source: Washington State HealthyYouth Survey, 2010

†Hispanic/Latino considered as a separate group and not included in any other group

*Statistically significantly different from white, non-Hispanic students

Produced by Public Health—Seattle & King County, Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit, 08/2012

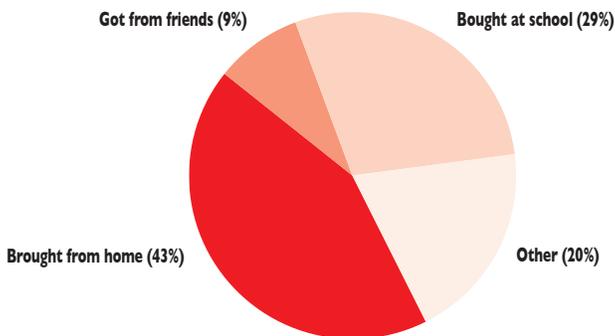
- ▶ Among high school youth, daily consumption of two or more sodas is highest among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (16%), and significantly higher than the 9% rate among white, non-Hispanic students. In addition, daily consumption of two or more sodas is twice as high among male students (14%) compared to female students (7%).
- ▶ Daily consumption of at least two sodas is higher among obese youth (15%) compared to healthy weight youth (9%) in grades 8, 10 and 12. One in five youth in King County is overweight or obese.⁹

Two thirds of youth have sugary drinks at school

- ▶ Nearly two thirds (65%) of middle and high school students report having consumed regular sodas, sports drinks or other flavored sweetened drinks at least one time in the past week at school.
- ▶ Of those youth who drink sugary drinks at school, 43% bring them from home, 9% get them from friends, 29% buy them at school, and 20% obtain them in other ways (Figure 2).
- ▶ 17% of male students, as compared to 8% of female students, report drinking 7 or more sugary drinks at school in a given week.

Figure 2:

Source of Sugary Drinks Consumed by Youth at School* – King County (2010)



Data Source: Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 2010. Consumption does not total 100% due to rounding.

*Includes after school and weekend activities at school (grades 8, 10, 12)

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Sugary drinks and children's health

For children and youth, an increase of one serving of sugary drinks per day increases the odds of being obese by 60%.¹⁰ As a result of obesity, today's children may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.¹¹ Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes; a third of all children born in the U.S. in 2000 are expected to develop diabetes. For Hispanic and African-American children, as many as half will do so.¹² Consumption of sugary drinks by young children has also been associated with an 80-120% increased risk of cavities.^{13, 14}

Learn more about sugary drinks

Public Health - Seattle & King County

www.kingcounty.gov/health/sugarydrinks

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthyeating/drinks.html

Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

www.yaleruddcenter.org

Center for Science in the Public Interest

www.cspinet.org

Kick the Can - Giving the Boot to Sugary Drinks

www.kickthecan.info

Soda Free Sundays

www.sodafreesundays.org

Data sources and references

Local youth sugary drink consumption data are from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, a school-based survey conducted every two years to measure adolescent health risk behaviors. Washington public schools, except institutional/correctional schools, serving grades 6, 8, 10 or 12 are eligible to participate. Estimate for grades 9-12 is derived from data collected in grades 8, 10 and 12.

For references, see: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/datawatch/Volume1103.aspx

This issue of Public Health Data Watch was produced by the Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit in collaboration with the Prevention Division. For more information and updates, contact data.request@kingcounty.gov and visit www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data.aspx, where you can subscribe to e-alerts to receive future Data Watches and other reports and announcements.