



## Reducing Sugary Drink Consumption: Sugary Drink Warning Labels

### *The American Heart Association's Position*

- The American Heart Association supports clinical guidance, programming, education, media campaigns, and policies that help lower the intake of sugary drinks by the American public.
- We welcome new and innovative public policy approaches that may help to curb sugary drink consumption. Warning labels on sugary drinks are one such intervention—this includes warning labels on advertisements, restaurant menus, and packages.
- We view a sugary drink warning label approach as one strategy in the broad policy portfolio to combat diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illness, which includes taxes on sugary drinks.
- We believe the sugary drink warning label should be designed drawing from the existing evidence with regards to the graphic images and messages that has the potential for the greatest health benefit.
- As with all new and innovative policies, we advocate that the impact be robustly evaluated, including consumer response and purchasing behavior, health impact on heart disease and diabetes, and monitoring the beverage industry response.
- It is also important to monitor for, and respond to, any unintended consequences such as driving consumers toward beverages that are not necessarily healthier, industry's use of the warning label as a shield against future legal or policy actions, and legal challenges that could significantly delay and increase the cost associated with implementing warning labels.

### **Fast Facts:**

1. Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugars in the American diet.<sup>1</sup>
2. Every year, 40,000 people living in the U.S. die from heart problems as a result of consuming too many sugary drinks.<sup>2</sup>
3. The American Heart Association recommends that children have no more than one 8-ounce sugary drink a week—but children are consuming as much as ten times that amount.<sup>3</sup>
4. A 20-ounce bottle of soda contains the equivalent of approximately 17 teaspoons of added sugars.<sup>4</sup> The American Heart Association recommends that adults consume no more than five to nine teaspoons of added sugars per day.<sup>5</sup>
5. High sugary drink consumption was associated with 51,694 deaths in 2012 and accounted for 7.4% of all deaths from heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes in the United States.<sup>6</sup>
6. Parents are significantly less likely to choose an SSB for their child when that beverage was accompanied with a label that warns them of health outcomes associated with sugary drink consumption.<sup>7</sup>

### **Progress to Date**

In 2015, San Francisco, CA passed a law that would place sugary drink warning label on all outdoor ads on city property, such as ads on city billboards, buses, transit shelters, posters, and stadiums. The law is currently under review by the Ninth Circuit Court.

For more information and resources from the American Heart Association's policy research department or sugary drinks positions please visit: <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/policy-research>.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Retrieved from: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.

<sup>2</sup> Micha R, Peñalvo JL, Cudhea F, Imamura F, Rehm CD, Mozaffarian D. Association Between Dietary Factors and Mortality From Heart Disease, Stroke, and Type 2 Diabetes in the United States. *Jama* 2017;317:912–24.

<sup>3</sup> Vos, MB, et al. Added sugars and cardiovascular disease risk in children: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2016;134. Retrieved from: <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/circulationaha/early/2017/01/25/CIR.000000000000485.full.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Wang, YC, et al. A penny-per-ounce tax on sugar-sweetened beverages would cut health and cost burdens of diabetes. *Health Affairs*. 2012. 31(1), 199–207.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, RK, et al. Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2009. 120(11), 1011–1020

<sup>6</sup> Association Between Dietary Factors and Mortality from Heart Disease, Stroke, and Type 2 Diabetes in the United States. Micha R, Peñalvo JL, Cudhea F, Imamura F, Rehm CD, Mozaffarian D. *JAMA*. 2017;317(9):912–924. Retrieved from: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2608221?applied=scweb&applied=scweb>

<sup>7</sup> Roberto CA, Wong D, Musicus A and Hammond D. The Influence of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Health Warning Labels on Parents' Choices. *Pediatrics*. 2016.