

The Sweet Truth About Added Sugars: Why New York Needs Menu Warnings S427 (Rivera)/A5305 (Reyes)

What are Added Sugars?

- Added sugars include sugars that are added to foods and beverages when they are processed. They include foods packaged as sweeteners (table sugar), syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. They do not include naturally occurring sugars that are found in milk, fruits, and vegetables.¹
- The Daily Value for added sugars established by the Food and Drug Administration is 50 grams per day based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet.²
- Americans get most of our added sugars from sugary drinks (drinks sweetened with added sugars, like soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavored milk, sweetened coffee, and juice drinks), along with along with desserts and sweet snacks.³

Fast Food Chains Sell Excessive Added Sugars in New York Communities

- A standard 20oz. Coca-Cola has 65g of sugar,⁴ which is equivalent to drinking 16 teaspoons of sugar in one beverage.
- Most soda fountain drinks served by fast-food restaurant chains contain more than a day's worth of added sugars: even most "small" drinks contain at least a full day's worth (50 grams), most "medium" or "regular" drinks contain at least 1 ½ days' worth, and most "large" contain 2 days' worth.⁵

Added Sugars & Our Health

- Sugary drinks contribute to type 2 diabetes and heart disease⁶—in part by leading to weight gain⁷—and are linked to a higher risk of dental cavities.⁸
- Consuming one or more 12-oz can of soda per day significantly increases the risk of dying from heart disease.⁹
- Healthy eating patterns that are low in added sugars are associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers.¹⁰

Diet, Chronic Disease & COVID-19 Risk

- In New York, heart disease was the leading cause of death from 2000-2018 and diabetes was a leading cause of premature death from 2011-2020.¹¹
- The projected total cost of chronic disease from 2016-2030 in New York is \$2.2 trillion.¹²
- If current trends continue, the projected per person medical and productivity costs of chronic disease in 2030 will be \$7,900 per New York resident.¹³
- Having type 2 diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure (hypertension) can make it more likely a person will get severely ill from COVID-19.¹⁴

Warning Icons are An Effective Tool to Reduce Added Sugars Consumption

- Research from randomized controlled trials has shown that warnings on sugary drinks can significantly reduce sugary drink purchases.¹⁵
- Sugary drink consumption dropped by nearly 25 percent in the 18 months after the country of Chile adopted “high in sugar” nutrient warnings on food and drink packaging nationwide.¹⁶
- A recent randomized control trial of 15,000 U.S. adults, showed that added-sugar warning labels reduced the likelihood that participants would order an item high in added sugars and improved consumer understanding.¹⁷

New Yorkers Support Added Sugar Warnings on Chain Restaurant Menus

- 78% of New York State residents support requiring warning icons on food and drink items with more than a day’s worth of added sugars.¹⁸



To learn more about the science behind nutrient warnings, check out CSPI’s Nutrient Warnings Factsheet at:

<https://bit.ly/NutrientWarnings>

Senate bill S427/A5305, sponsored by New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Karines Reyes, would require warning icons on chain restaurant menus for items that exceed an entire day’s worth of added sugars (50g).

For more information, please contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at dnara@cspinet.org.

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- ² Ibid., 1.
- ³ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.
- ⁴ The Coca-Cola Company. (n.d.). How much sugar is in Coca-Cola? The Coca-Cola Company. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/faqs/how-much-sugar-is-in-coca-cola>.
- ⁵ Center for Science in the Public Interest. Sweet Excess: Largest Restaurant Chains Consistently Serve Up Drinks with More than a Day's Worth of Added Sugars; A Restaurant Menu Survey. Published July 2021.
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- ⁷ de Ruyter, J. C., Olthof, M. R., Seidell, J. C., & Katan, M. B. (2012). A trial of sugar-free or sugar-sweetened beverages and body weight in children. *The New England journal of medicine*, 367(15), 1397–1406.
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- ¹³ Ibid., 2.
- ¹⁴ Yang, J., Zheng, Y., Gou, X., Pu, K., Chen, Z., Guo, Q., Ji, R., Wang, H., Wang, Y., & Zhou, Y. (2020). Prevalence of comorbidities and its effects in patients infected with SARS-CoV-2: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of infectious diseases: IJID : official publication of the International Society for Infectious Diseases*, 94, 91–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.03.017>
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