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Summary of Study Findings: Calories & Alcopops

This summary highlights the major findings of a census-balanced, nationally representative telephone study conducted in late September, 2003 among 600 Americans ages 18 years and older. The Calories & Alcopops study was conducted by Global Strategy Group (GSG), a Washington, DC and New York based strategic polling firm. The margin of error for the study is +/- 4.0%.

- GSG over-sampled for younger Americans ages 18-to-29 and the sample for this group is 200 (margin of error +/- 6.9%). Results from this group were re-weighted back to the original sample.

The major **conclusions** of the study are as follows:

1. A large majority of Americans pays attention to the caloric content of their food and beverage choices, and most Americans think that the calorie content of their diet is important. Nearly all Americans think it's important to avoid becoming overweight or obese.
2. Americans know about alcopops and many say they've tried them. Awareness and usage of these products is much higher among older teens and younger adults than among others.
3. Americans don't know that alcopops are high in calories. Four in ten mistakenly think that calorie-rich alcopops have about the same or fewer calories than a regular beer and about half of young people – those who drink them – also mistakenly share that belief. Most Americans mistakenly think that alcopops have fewer calories than popular high-calorie foods, such as a Hostess Twinkie, or a Krispy Kreme donut. A large majority of Americans believe that producers advertise alcopops in such a way as to obscure their high calorie content.
4. Many Americans – including younger people who represent the key target demographic for alcopops – say drinkers would modify their behavior and drink fewer alcopops and less alcohol in total if they were aware of the high calorie content of alcopops.
5. Americans don't know whether popular alcopops are more like beer, wine, or liquor. Most Americans, including most drinkers and alcopop consumers, either don't know or think alcopops are something they're not.
6. Younger adults and other Americans strongly support requiring producers to provide calorie content and other consumer information, such as alcohol content, serving size, and ingredients on the labels of all alcoholic beverages. They also support posting this information at bars and restaurants where alcohol is not served in its original container. Americans support labeling because they believe consumers will make better choices about their drinking if this information were available.

Calories & Alcopops – Detailed Findings

1. **A large majority of Americans pays attention to the caloric content of their food and beverage choices, and most Americans think that the calorie content of their diet is important. Nearly all Americans think it's important to avoid becoming overweight or obese.**

Americans do pay attention to diet and their weight.

- More than 60% of Americans and half of people 18-29 pay attention to the calorie content of their food and beverage choices.
- 70% of Americans and more than 2 in 3 (69%) women 18-29 and drinkers (66%) also say that the calorie content of their food and beverage choices is important.
- 85% of drinkers, 88% of women 18-29, and 85% of Americans overall say it's important not to become overweight or obese. Nearly 60% of Americans, including 58% of drinkers think it's **“very important.”**

2. **Americans know about alcopops and many say they've tried them. Awareness and usage of these products is much higher among older teens and younger adults than among others.**

Older teens and younger adults are aware of alcopops and they drink them.

- Awareness of alcopops is high, particularly among Americans ages 18 to 29.
- Two in three Americans (66%) – 71% of men and 62% of women – are familiar with alcopops. Brands with the highest awareness include Smirnoff Ice (66%), Mike's Hard Lemonade (61%), Bacardi Silver (54%), Jack Daniel's Hard Cola (47%) and Skyy Blue (41%).
- Familiarity with alcopops is much higher among Americans ages 18 to 29, which includes the key demographic for these products. More than 4 in 5 young people (82%) – 80% of younger men and 84% of younger women – are familiar with alcopops. Brands with the highest awareness include Smirnoff Ice (86%), Mike's Hard Lemonade (77%), Bacardi Silver (74%), Skyy Blue (60%) and Jack Daniel's Hard Cola (50%).
- Alcopop usage is much higher among Americans ages 18 to 29, but half of all Americans say they've tried one of the brands.
- More than 7 in 10 (72%) younger men and women have tried alcopops. Most popular brands include Smirnoff Ice (75% have tried one), Mike's Hard lemonade (70%), Bacardi Silver (56%) and Skyy Blue (54%).
- Half of all Americans (50%) – 53% of men and 48% of women – have tried alcopops. Most popular brands include Smirnoff Ice (65% have tried one), Mike's Hard lemonade (62%), Bacardi Silver (55%) and Skyy Blue (43%).

3. **Americans don't know that alcopops are high in calories. Four in ten mistakenly think that calorie-rich alcopops have about the same or fewer calories than a regular beer and about half of young people – those who drink them – also mistakenly share that belief. Most Americans mistakenly think that alcopops have fewer calories than popular high-calorie foods, such as a Hostess Twinkie, or a Krispy Kreme donut. A large majority of Americans believe that producers advertise alcopops in such a way as to obscure their high calorie content.**

Americans are clueless when it comes to estimating the amount of calories contained in an average alcopop. About half have no idea how many calories they contain and most that hazard to guess think they contain far fewer calories than they actually do. Younger Americans are more likely to believe that alcopops contain fewer calories than they do.

- Nearly half of Americans (47%) have no idea how many calories are contained in the average alcopop. Those who think they know are 50% (32% vs. 21%) more likely to think alcopops have fewer – rather than more – calories than they actually do (average alcopop contains 230-275 calories). Nine in ten Americans (89%) either have no idea or think that alcopops contain fewer calories than they actually do.
- Americans ages 18 to 29 are more likely than older Americans to think they know how many calories are in the average alcopop and they are more likely to be wrong. Half of younger people (49%) think alcopops contain fewer calories than they do and 39% have no idea. Younger women (42%) are more likely than younger men (37%) to say they have no idea how many calories are in alcopops. Younger people (the principle consumers of these beverages) are considerably more likely to think that alcopops are lower in calories than older adults (49% vs. 32%).

As the table on the following page illustrates, approximately 2 in 3 Americans mistakenly believe that beer and common high-calorie foods have about the same or more calories than the average alcopop (230-275 calories). Although Americans generally have low awareness of the calorie content of foods, poll findings clearly suggest that most people – especially younger women ages 18-to-29 – perceive alcopops to be much lower in calories than they actually are. Four in ten Americans (41%) and half of 18- to 29-year-old men and women (47%) incorrectly think that alcopops have the same calories as or fewer calories than a regular beer.

American's Perceptions of Calorie Content of Alcopops Compared to High-Calorie Foods							
Contains the same or more calories than the average alcopop	All (%)	M (%)	F (%)	18-29 (%)	18-29 M (%)	18-29 F (%)	Drink (%)
One Twinkie (150 calories)	69	64	83	66	47	89	75
Krispy Krème glazed donut (220 calories)	66	59	73	75	64	88	70
12 ounce regular beer (145 calories)	41	35	47	47	46	49	36
One package of chocolate covered milk balls – 18 pieces (190 calories)	64	57	72	82	82	83	63

Two in three Americans (67%) – 68% of women and 66% of men – agree that producers advertise alcopops in such a way as to hide or obscure the high calorie content of alcopops. Younger adults ages 18 to 29 agree (60%).

4. Many Americans – including younger people who represent the key target demographic for alcopops – say drinkers would modify their behavior and drink fewer alcopops and less alcohol in total if they were aware of the high calorie content of alcopops.

Large numbers of Americans say that people who drink alcopops would likely modify their drinking behavior if they were aware that these drinks contained between 230 and 275 calories.

- Two in three Americans (67%) – 71% of women and 64% of men – say people *would drink fewer alcopops at one sitting or on one occasion*.
- More than half of Americans (56%) – 68% of women and 44% of men – say people *would switch to beer or light beer*.
- Half (49%) of Americans – 55% of women and 44% of men – say people *would drink alcopops less frequently*.
- More than 4 in 10 Americans (45%) – 55% of women and 37% of men – say people *would consider switching to lower calorie non-alcoholic beverages at some point*.
- Four in ten Americans (39%) – 43% of women and 33% of men – say people *would drink less alcohol in total*.

As the table below illustrates, women ages 18 to 29 are much more likely than men ages 18 to 29 to say that consumers would modify their drinking behavior when informed of the high calorie content of alcopops.

- Younger women are twice as likely as younger men (67% to 33%) to say that consumers would consider switching to lower calorie non-alcoholic beverages *and* twice as likely to say that consumers would switch to beer or light beer (60% to 30%).
- Younger women (48%) are more than twice as likely as younger men (20%) to say that consumers would drink less alcohol in total.

Actions People Would Likely Take if They Knew Alcopops Contained Between 230-275 Calories	All 18-29 (%)	Male 18-29 (%)	Female 18-29 (%)
% Likely			
Drink fewer of these alcopops at one sitting or on one occasion	69	66	71
Switch to beer or light beer	48	30	60
Consider switching to lower calorie non-alcoholic beverages at some point	46	33	67
Drink alcopops less frequently	39	34	47
Drink less alcohol in total	37	20	48

5. Americans don't know whether popular alcopops are more like beer, wine, or liquor. Most Americans, including most drinkers and alcopop consumers, either don't know or think alcopops are something they're not.

Americans don't really know what alcopops are.

- More than 3 in 4 drinkers and women 18-29 either don't know or mistakenly believe that Smirnoff Ice, which is marketed as a malt beverage, is more like wine or liquor than it is like beer. Consumers are similarly confused about the composition of other leading alcopops, including Skyy Blue and Bacardi Silver.
- By a greater than 2 to 1 margin, Americans think that alcopops are more like liquor than beer, even though they're marketed as malt beverages: Smirnoff Ice – 30% vs. 14%; Skyy Blue – 25% vs. 12%; Bacardi Silver – 36% vs. 17%. People who say they consume these products are even more likely than the average American to think they're liquor than beer: Smirnoff Ice – 34% vs. 13%; Skyy Blue – 29% vs. 11%; Bacardi Silver – 39% vs. 17%.

6. Younger adults and other Americans strongly support requiring producers to provide calorie content and other consumer information, such as alcohol content, serving size, and ingredients on the labels of all alcoholic beverages. They also support posting this information at bars and restaurants where alcohol is not served in its original container. Americans support labeling because they believe consumers will make better choices about their drinking if this information were available.

Young Americans ages 18 to 29 and older adults strongly support detailed labeling on alcoholic-beverage containers. As the table below illustrates, 3 in 4 (75%) or more of all men and women support requiring alcohol producers to include serving size, calorie content, alcohol content and ingredient information on the labels of all alcoholic beverages.

Support for Labeling 1 st # - Strongly support 2 nd # - Total support	All (%)	M (%)	F (%)	18-29 (%)	18-29 M (%)	18-29 F (%)	Drink (%)
Calorie Content	65/89	61/82	69/95	59/90	55/88	63/92	68/88
Serving Size	62/84	54/75	70/94	56/86	53/78	58/94	64/85
Alcohol Content	77/94	73/93	82/95	78/92	75/89	80/94	77/96
Ingredients	66/91	57/87	75/95	68/86	65/81	71/92	69/91

Noteworthy about the findings:

- A large majority of young Americans ages 18 to 29 and older adults **STRONGLY** support requiring alcohol producers to include all of this consumer information (serving size, calorie content, alcohol content, ingredients) on the labels of alcoholic beverages.
- Young men ages 18 to 29 are only slightly less likely to support labeling than young women ages 18 to 29.
- Those who drink alcoholic beverages are more likely to support labeling on alcoholic beverages than all Americans.

The desire to have this information available for alcoholic beverages is strong among consumers. In fact, a large majority of Americans support requiring bars and restaurants to post this information where alcohol is not served in its original container.

- Three in five Americans (60%) – 57% of men and 62% of women – support this requirement for bars and restaurants.
- The level of support among young Americans ages 18 to 29 is nearly as strong: 56% of young men and 61% of young women support requiring bars and restaurant to post this consumer information when alcohol is not served in its original container.

Poll results clearly indicate that Americans strongly support the labeling of alcoholic beverages because they believe consumers will make better decisions about their drinking.

- Nearly 3 in 5 Americans younger and older Americans (58%) think that consumers would use alcohol content and calorie information on the label to make better choices about their drinking. More than 3 in 5 drinkers (61%), and especially young women (75%) think that consumers would use alcohol content and calorie information to make better choices about their drinking.

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