Facts on Sugar Drink Consumption

**Pouring sugar into Americans’ diets**

- In 2013, the average American drank just over 38 gallons of soda a year—or about eight 12-ounce cans a week.¹
- In 2011, beverage companies produced enough sugar drinks (e.g., sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweetened teas and coffees, and energy drinks) to provide an average of 45 gallons per American—or slightly more than nine 12-ounce cans a week.²
- Sugar drinks were the single-largest source of calories in the American diet in 2010, providing an average of about seven percent of total calories per person.³
- Sugar drinks accounted for 47 percent of all added sugars in the American diet in 2010.⁴
- According to 2009–2010 NHANES data, more than 50 percent of adults consume at least one sugar drink per day.⁵

**Sugar drinks significant in teens’ diets**

- Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a top source of calories in children’s and teens’ diets, accounting for 118 calories per day.⁶
- For two to eighteen-year-olds, sugar drinks account for 60 percent of total daily calories from added sugar.⁷
- In 2015, 20 percent of high school students drank soda one or more times per day, 13 percent of students drank two or more, and 7 percent drank three or more.⁸
- In 2010, U.S. youth consumed an average of 155 calories from sugar-sweetened beverages, amounting to 8 percent of their daily calorie intake.⁹
- In 2008, five percent of children, 16 percent of adolescents, and 20 percent of young adults consumed more than 500 calories a day from sugar drinks—an amount equivalent to more than three 12-ounce cans.¹⁰

**How much is too much?**

- A typical 12-ounce can of regular cola contains nearly 9 teaspoons of added sugars; a 20-ounce bottle contains 14 ½ teaspoons of sugars.¹¹
- The American Heart Association recommends a maximum daily intake of six teaspoons of added sugars for women and nine teaspoons for men.¹²
- For a 2000 calorie diet, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans consume no more than 50 grams, or 12.5 teaspoons, of added sugar per day.¹³
- In 2008, teenage boys consumed an average of 273 calories a day from sugar drinks, nearly twice the American Heart Association’s recommended consumption of added
sugars from all sources.\textsuperscript{14,15}

**Industry’s history of super-sizing**

- The average soda sold in the United States has more than doubled in size since the 1950s, from 6.5 ounces to 16.2 ounces.\textsuperscript{16}
- In 1955, a cup of Coca-Cola at McDonald’s was seven ounces. Today, a children’s size Coca-Cola at McDonald’s is 12 ounces, and a medium is 21 ounces.\textsuperscript{17,18}

\textsuperscript{6} U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, op cit.
\textsuperscript{12} American Heart Association. (2016). Added sugars. Available at http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Added-Sugars_UCM_305858_Article.jsp#.WHZW71UrLcs.
\textsuperscript{15} American Heart Association, op cit.
\textsuperscript{18} Just DR and Wansink B. (2014). One man’s tall is another man’s small: How the framing of portion size influences food choice. *Health Econ*, 23(7): 776–791.