



# SIP ON THIS

Sugary drinks are one of the leading contributors to obesity in San Mateo County

This brief describes the link between sugar-loaded beverages (SLBs) — which include sodas, sports drinks, and other beverages that contain added caloric sweeteners — and obesity in San Mateo County. Get Healthy San Mateo County (GHSMC) seeks to discourage sugar-loaded beverage consumption to prevent overweight and obesity<sup>1</sup> in our county.

## THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF ADDED SUGAR IN OUR DIET

The National Health and Nutritional Survey estimates that more than one-third of all sugars consumed are from SLBs. San Mateo County residents are no exception to this: 33% of children in San Mateo County ages 2–11 drink one or more sodas every day; 50% of youth ages 12–17 drink one or more sodas every day; and 14% of adults drink one or more sodas every day.<sup>2</sup>

## A LEADING CONTRIBUTOR TO OBESITY

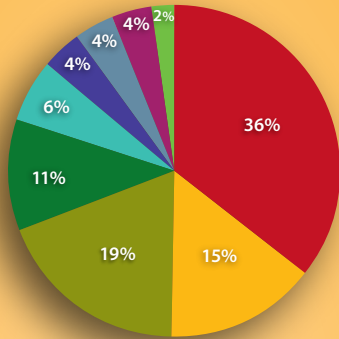
SLBs contribute significantly to overweight, obesity and related diseases. Recent research reveals that SLBs are one of the leading contributors to increasing waistlines.<sup>3</sup> **Our bodies don't compensate for liquid calories in the same way as calories from solid food.**<sup>4</sup> A report released in 2009 by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found that people who drink one or more sodas a day are 27% more likely to be overweight or obese, regardless of race/ethnicity and income.<sup>2</sup>

## THE COST OF OBESITY AND RELATED DISEASES

In San Mateo County, 25% of children and more than 50% of adults are overweight or obese.<sup>6</sup> These averages have been increasing over the past twenty years, and

poorer communities and communities of color have been disproportionately affected. Overweight and obesity often lead to chronic disease, such as Type 2 diabetes. One in three children born in 2000 is expected to develop Type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime. Obesity and obesity-related diseases contribute to absenteeism from school and poor academic performance, and lead to an array of other health problems. In addition to decreased productivity and quality of life, obesity and related diseases are estimated to cost San Mateo County approximately \$574,000,000 annually.<sup>7</sup>

Sources of Added Sugars in the U.S. Diet  
Age 2 Years and Older, NHANES 2005–2006\*



- Soda, energy, sports drinks
- All other food categories
- Grain or dairy-based desserts
- Fruit drinks
- Candy
- Ready-to-eat cereals
- Sugars and honey
- Tea
- Yeast breads

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010.  
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/guidelines/PolicyDoc.pdf>  
\*National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES)

## \$500 MILLION

is spent annually marketing  
carbonated drinks to children<sup>6</sup>

# TAKE ACTION SAN MATEO COUNTY

It is predicted that this is the first generation of children who will live fewer years and have a lower quality of life than their parents<sup>8</sup>. You can reduce consumption of sodas in your community through simple actions.

What Can Be Done?	Who?
Eliminate <b>Sugar-Loaded Beverages (SLBs)</b> at your organization's events	EVERYONE
Have <b>drinking water available</b> at your organizations, schools, facilities, afterschool programs, childcare centers and preschools	EVERYONE
Promote <b>campaigns</b> like Rethink Your Drink and Soda-Free Summer. <sup>9</sup>	EVERYONE
Implement a <b>tax on SLBs</b> ; funds raised could support nutrition and physical activity efforts	Cities, Counties
Implement a City or County resolution encouraging retailers to <b>remove SLBs from checkout lanes</b>	Cities, Counties
Implement healthy food vending policies to <b>limit the number of SLB retailers near schools</b> and playgrounds	Cities, Counties, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Boards

## Get Healthy San Mateo County



*Get Healthy San Mateo County (GHSMC) is a countywide collaborative of community-based organizations, leaders, schools, afterschool programs, childcare centers, healthcare providers, cities and County staff. Our mission is to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy food and physical activity. GHSMC identifies the most prominent issues in battling the onset of overweight and obesity and implements solutions.*

<sup>1</sup> For children and adolescents (ages 2–19 years), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines overweight as a BMI at or above the 85th percentile and lower than the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex, and obesity as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex.

<sup>2</sup> Babey SH, Jones M, Yu H, Goldstein H. *Bubbling Over: Soda Consumption and Its Link to Obesity in California*. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research; 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Gortmaker, S; Long, M; Wang, C. *The Negative Impact of Sugar Sweetened Beverages on Children's Health: A Research Synthesis*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Nov. 2009.

<sup>4</sup> *Using Regulatory Fees to Combat Adverse Effects of Sugar Sweetened Beverages*. Public Health Law and Policy; 2009.

<sup>5</sup> *Marketing Food to Children and Adolescents: A Review of Industry Expenditures, Activities, and Self-Regulation*. Federal Trade Commission; July 2008.

<sup>6</sup> *2007 California Health Interview Survey*. California Center for Public Health Advocacy; 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity and Physical Activity in California Counties*. California Center for Public Health Advocacy; 2004.

<sup>8</sup> S. Jay Olshansky et al., *A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century*. New England Journal of Medicine; 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Soda-Free Summer campaign. [www.sodafreesummer.org](http://www.sodafreesummer.org).



For assistance with taking action in your community, or if you have questions or comments, please contact the Health Policy & Planning division of the San Mateo County Health System at (650)573-2398 or [hpp@co.sanmateo.ca.us](mailto:hpp@co.sanmateo.ca.us).