



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.¹
2. Every year, 40,000 people living in the U.S. die from heart problems as a result of consuming too many sugary drinks.²
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 seven times the recommended amount.³
4. A 20-ounce bottle of soda contains the equivalent of approximately 17 teaspoons of added sugars.⁴ The American Heart Association recommends that adults consume no more than 36 ounces of sugary beverages each week.^{5, 6}
5. In 2012, high sugary drink consumption was associated with approximately 50,000 deaths from heart disease and type 2 diabetes.²
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.⁷

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. In 2021, San Francisco repealed the warning ordinance effective September 4, 2021.

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>.

Policy At-A-Glance: Sugary Drink Warning Labels

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