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One in Three Young Children in California Consumed One or More Sugary Beverages a Day in 2013-14

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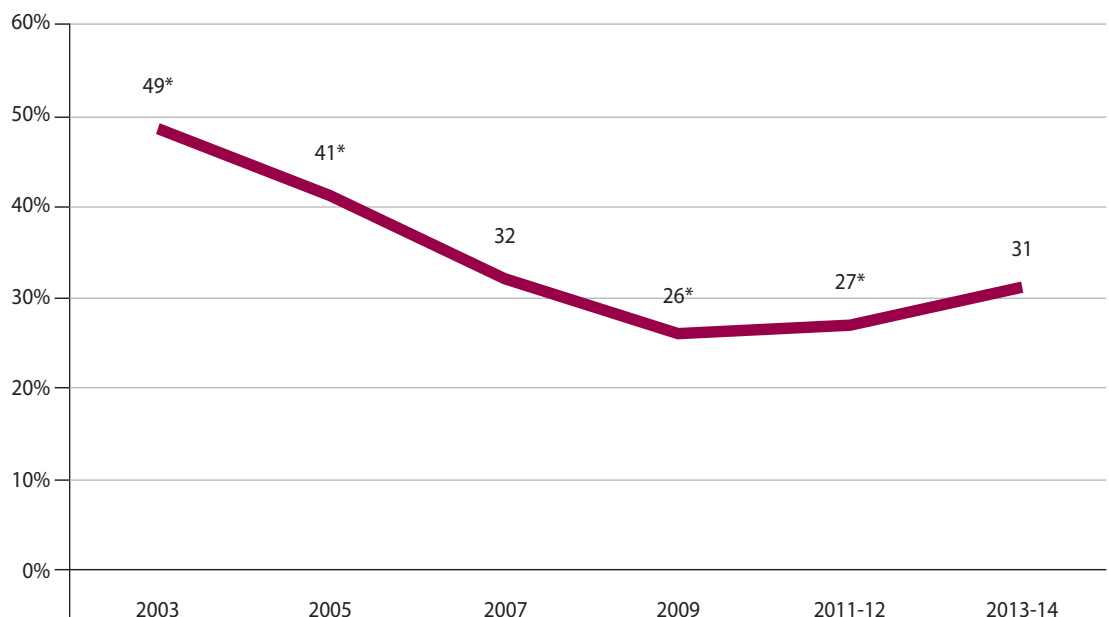
Beverages with added sugar, such as soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks, are the largest source of added sugar in the diets of both children and adults in the U.S.¹ Consuming beverages that have added caloric sweeteners (e.g., sucrose or high fructose corn syrup) is associated with overweight and obesity, increased risk of type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, liver disease, and dental decay, as well as with decreased consumption

of more nutritious foods such as milk, fruits, and vegetables.²⁻⁹

In California, nearly one in three children ages 2-11 (31 percent) consumed one or more sugary beverages per day in 2013-14. This percentage is higher than the percentages of children who consumed sugary beverages every day in 2009 or in 2011-12. Between 2003 and 2009, the

Exhibit 1

Percent of Children Ages 2-11 Consuming One or More Sugary Beverages per Day, California, 2003 to 2013-14



Source: 2003 through 2013-14 California Health Interview Survey

*Significantly different from 2013-14.

Exhibit 2

Percent of Children Ages 2-11 Consuming One or More Sugary Beverages per Day in California's Most Populous Counties, 2013-14

County	Percent	95% Confidence Interval
Los Angeles	30.8	24.6 - 37.0
San Diego	28.9	21.9 - 36.0
Orange	35.5	23.9 - 47.2
Riverside	37.9	23.7 - 52.1
San Bernardino	38.7	26.4 - 50.9
California	30.9	28.3 - 33.5

Source: 2013-14 California Health Interview Survey

proportion of children consuming at least one sugary drink per day decreased from 49 percent to 26 percent (Exhibit 1). However, since 2009, this number has increased to 31 percent. Although consumption levels are still not as high as they were in 2003, this trend is troubling because it suggests that the reductions in consumption observed among children may be reversing.

There is considerable variation in the consumption of sugary drinks across California counties. Exhibit 2 shows the prevalence of consumption of sugary drinks among children ages 2-11 in the five most populous counties in California in 2013-14. Nearly 40 percent of young children in San Bernardino County consumed at least one sugary beverage per day, compared to less than 30 percent in San Diego County. This regional variation is likely due to a number of factors, including differences in demographic, social, economic, and environmental characteristics, as well as differences in local policies and programs. Additionally, the food environment in California varies greatly from place to place. Some counties have limited availability of stores offering affordable fresh produce and other healthy options compared to the availability of convenience stores and fast-food restaurants, which tend to offer less healthy options. Living in food environments

with a relative lack of access to affordable healthy options has been linked to unhealthy eating behaviors, such as greater consumption of fast foods and soda, as well as obesity.¹⁰⁻¹³

Discussion

National health organizations recommend reducing consumption of beverages with added sugar or other caloric sweeteners to help prevent obesity and improve public health.¹⁴ Sugary beverage consumption is influenced by a variety of social and environmental factors, including the food environment, marketing, education, and norms. The recent increase in consumption of sugary drinks among California children suggests that continued education and policy efforts are needed to reduce sugary beverage consumption.

Data Source and Methods

This fact sheet examines the prevalence of consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among California children ages 2-11 using data from the 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011-12, and 2013-14 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Each year, CHIS completes interviews with adults, adolescents, and parents of children in more than 20,000 households, drawn from every county in the state. Interviews are conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean. In this fact sheet, the

“This trend is troubling because it suggests that the reductions in consumption observed among children may be reversing.”

term “sugary beverages” refers to regular soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, and juice drinks with added caloric sweeteners. It does not include diet beverages or 100 percent fruit juice.

The California Health Interview Survey is a collaboration of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Health Care Services, and the Public Health Institute. For funders and additional information on CHIS, visit www.chis.ucla.edu.

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Endnotes

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