

Rationing soft drink sizes: A good public health move

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New York City's limit of a maximum 16-ounce size of sugar-sweetened drinks for sale in eating establishments is a positive public health move and should be replicated in Canada, argues an editorial in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

"Because sugary drinks are the leading source of dietary calories in North America, New York City's latest measure is a rational strategy to combat obesity on a [population level](#)," writes Dr. Matthew Stanbrook, Deputy Editor, Practice, *CMAJ*. "The scientific case for reducing sugar consumption is stronger than ever. Recent evidence has established that the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages consumed substantially increases a person's [genetic risk](#) for obesity."

Critics of [public health interventions](#) such as this argue they are heavy-handed, are paternalistic and threaten personal choice. However, public health departments often take more intrusive measures when dealing with communicable diseases to ensure the safety of the population.

"New York City's new regulation on sugary drinks exemplifies how governments can intervene: not by limiting personal freedoms, but rather by normalizing the definition of what a serving is supposed to be."

People who choose to consume excessive amounts of [sugary drinks](#) are free to purchase a second drink if they wish.

"New York City's leadership on public health nutrition puts Canada's

inaction to shame," concludes Dr. Stanbrook. "Our federal government has time and again refused to enact regulations on many of the issues New York is already addressing, disbanding expert panels and ignoring scientific advice. ... We should all be inspired by New York's lead, showing us that this can be done successfully."

More information: Paper:

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