

Sugary drinks weigh heavily on teenage obesity

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New research shows sugary drinks are the worst offenders in the fight against youth obesity and recommends that B.C. schools fully implement healthy eating guidelines to reduce their consumption.

Data from the 2008 Adolescent Health survey among 11,000 grade seven to 12 students in British Columbia schools indicates sugary drinks like soda increased the odds of obesity more than other foods such as pizza, [french fries](#), chips and candies.

The study, published today in the *International Journal of Behavioral*

Nutrition and Physical Activity, found that students in schools where sugary drinks were available consumed them more often and were more likely to be obese on the BMI scale.

"This study adds to the mounting literature that shows the high concentration of sugar in [soft drinks](#) contributes to obesity in adolescents," says lead author Louise Mâsse, an associate professor in the University of British Columbia's School of Population and Public Health, and a scientist at the Child & Family Research Institute at BC Children's Hospital.

In 2005, the B.C. government released guidelines for healthy eating that suggested [sugary drinks](#) not be sold in schools, but Mâsse says full implementation is necessary to help address [obesity](#) trends.

"Schools have an important role in promoting healthy dietary habits," says Mâsse. "For example, students who are moderate consumers of these types of beverages were 60 per cent less likely to consume them in the schools that followed healthy nutrition guidelines.

"Creating an environment within the school that is more conducive to [healthy eating](#) will likely provide the greatest benefit in supporting healthy weights among adolescents."

More information: www.ijbnpa.org/content/11/1/29

Provided by University of British Columbia

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