

Kids' sugary drink intake drops when calorie data is displayed - Tehran Times

Health Desk

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When calorie data on sugary drinks is displayed in convenience stores, teenagers buy fewer of them, especially African-Americans and children from lower-income neighborhoods, researchers from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health reported in the American Journal of Public Health.

Sara Bleich, PhD. and team set out to determine how three ways of providing teenagers with calorie data might impact on their purchasing and consumption of sugary drinks. They placed three kinds of different posters: * Calorie poster - one said that a fruit drink has 250 calories* Percentage of daily intake poster - it said that the fruit drink had 10% of their daily recommended calorie need

* Physical activity poster - this one informed that they would need to run for 50 minutes in order to use up the calories contained in a fruit drink or soda

The authors found that purchases of sugary drinks dropped by approximately 40% if posters were displayed, compared to providing no information at all.

The physical activity poster had the greatest impact - this reduced sugar-sweetened drink purchases by 50%.

The authors informed that their study is unique in comparing how different types of posters influence teenagers' purchasing habits.

"Teenagers were less likely to purchase a sugar-sweetened beverage and more likely to select a healthier choice like water after they saw the calorie information signs," said lead researcher Sara Bleich, PhD, assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health."

The sale of non-calorie or very low-calorie drinks, such as diet soda or water went up from 6.7% of all purchases at the start of the study to 12% to 14% at the end, after the children had been exposed to the posters.

Bleich said:"This study showed that Black teenagers will use calorie information, especially when presented in an easy- to-understand format, such as a physical activity equivalent, to make healthier choices when it comes to buying a drink at the local corner store. Most consumers underestimate the number of calories in a can of soda, and they often do not realize that such calories can add up quickly."

The posters were placed on four convenience stores. All the stores were near middle/high schools in lower-income neighborhoods in Baltimore city. The majority of residents were African-Americans. The three types of posters were randomly selected and placed in the stores. According to prior studies, adolescents in the USA consume approximately 300 calories each

day from just sugary drinks. Regular sugary drink consumption has been shown to significantly raise the risk of becoming overweight and obese, which in turn increases the individual's chances of developing serious and chronic illnesses, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

U.S. authorities are currently taking steps to make some food and beverage sellers display calorie information on their products. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) will soon publish final regulations for chain restaurants regarding displaying calorie data next to the price of dishes on their menus, as well as information of total sodium, fat, and other nutritional components.

(Source: Medical News Today)