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## BECOME ACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- Let your teen's school know that you DON'T support vending machine sales of sweetened drinks at school.
- Write to your legislator in support of an extra "soda" tax to help pay for increased healthcare costs associated with teen obesity.
- Partner with your local health department to offer nutrition counseling and classes at school for all students.

Additional resources for you and your teen:

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)  
[www.kidshealth.org/teen](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen)  
[www.medlineplus.gov/teenhealth](http://www.medlineplus.gov/teenhealth)

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- The average teen consumes 15-20% of their daily calories in the form of sugary drinks.
  - If you drink one 12 oz. can of soda everyday for a year, that would equal 30 pounds of sugar and perhaps 16 pounds of body fat from extra calories.
  - Teens who drink soda with their meals are less likely to drink milk and forego the calcium they need to maintain healthy bones. These "empty" calories also don't satisfy hunger and teens may end up overeating.
  - A typical soda contains 40 grams of sugar in 12 oz (that's 10 teaspoons). Energy drinks have up to 28 grams of sugar in 8 oz and Sports drinks have about 35 grams of sugar per 20 oz container.

*A Gonzaga graduate nursing student, Danielle Martini, created this informational material. It should be used in consultation with a health care provider.*

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## BREAKING THE TEEN SODA HABIT

### A GUIDE FOR PARENTS





## THE PROBLEM OF TOO MUCH SODA

Teens today drink 300% more soda, sports and energy drinks, than teens drank 20 years ago. Soda consumption is the leading cause of teen obesity in the U.S. It is not surprising then that teen obesity is now an epidemic. 31% percent of teens are overweight and 16 % are obese!

This is leading to serious health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which can increase the risk of heart disease and other health problems. Joint and back problems can also be caused by too much weight. Obesity can affect self-esteem, lead to loneliness and put a teen at risk for bullying.

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## REASONS TEENS GIVE FOR DRINKING SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES

Teens can have a hectic lifestyle balancing school, sports, activities and work. They also have more freedom and with that means more influence from friends and the community. Many teens report that they simply don't have time to worry about what they eat, especially when out with friends. In addition they report sweet drinks are:

- Convenient It's easy to grab a soda from the fridge or stop at a convenience store and fill up.
- They cost less than more nutritious drinks; especially when they choose "biggie" or "super" sizes.
- They taste good. Drinking sodas becomes a habit and our taste buds get used to the extra sweet taste.
- Available. Many schools sell sodas and sports drinks in vending machines..
- Marketed to appeal to teen culture and advertised on TV, magazines and the Internet.

## How Parents can make simple changes at home to help teens choose healthier drinks

Be a role model. If you're drinking sugary drinks set a goal to cut down, choose diet drinks or better yet drink water.

Consider only buying soda as a special treat, you might try the new 8 oz cans to cut portion size. Avoid 2 liter bottles.

For that "fizzy" taste try mixing two parts soda water with one part fruit juice, make a pitcher to keep handy.

Have lots of healthy snacks available, like fresh fruits, yogurts, cheese, low-fat milk, pretzels, nuts and bagels.

Teach your teen the value of understanding food nutrition labels.

Nutrition and exercise go hand in hand. Encourage your teen to be active by engaging in family activities such as hiking, swimming, biking- anything that gets the family moving!

