

Question

I heard that losing weight means I have to give up certain foods I like, such as snack foods, candy or carbonated soft drinks; is that true?

Answer

There are no such things as “bad” foods or beverages, just poor diets. If you love chocolate, ice cream or beverages that contain sugar, you can still include these foods in your diet (in moderation – remember all calories count!), as long as you also choose a balance of other foods and beverages and are physically active, i.e., move and exercise.

Coca-Cola, for example, contains no more sugar and calories than the same amount of orange juice, and less sugar and fewer calories than the same amount of apple juice or grape juice.

Different people need different levels of calories from their diet, and therefore may want to choose different levels of calories from their foods and drinks. We offer low-calorie, reduced-calorie and no-calorie soft drinks as well as regular sugar-sweetened soft drinks. It is also reassuring to know that the safety of sugar and low-calorie sweeteners has been reviewed and confirmed by many experts in food and ingredient safety.

The weight that’s right for you depends on many factors including your gender, height, age and heredity. Extra body fat increases your chances for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some types of cancer and other illnesses, particularly if you carry this extra weight around your middle. But being too thin can increase your risk for osteoporosis, menstrual irregularities and other health problems. If you’re constantly losing and regaining weight, a registered dietitian or nutritionist can help you develop sensible eating plans. Regular exercise is also important to maintaining a healthy weight.

Carbonated soft drinks can be part of a healthy lifestyle that includes a variety of foods and beverages and physical activity, but they should not be the only beverage people consume. Carbonated soft drinks can help quench your thirst and help provide your body with its daily fluid needs. They can also supply carbohydrate fuel that helps give you energy necessary for daily activities. The range of beverages and package sizes at The Coca-Cola Company gives people the freedom to make the choices that are right for them – whether it is juice or juice beverages, diet soft drinks, regular soft drinks, iced tea, or bottled water.

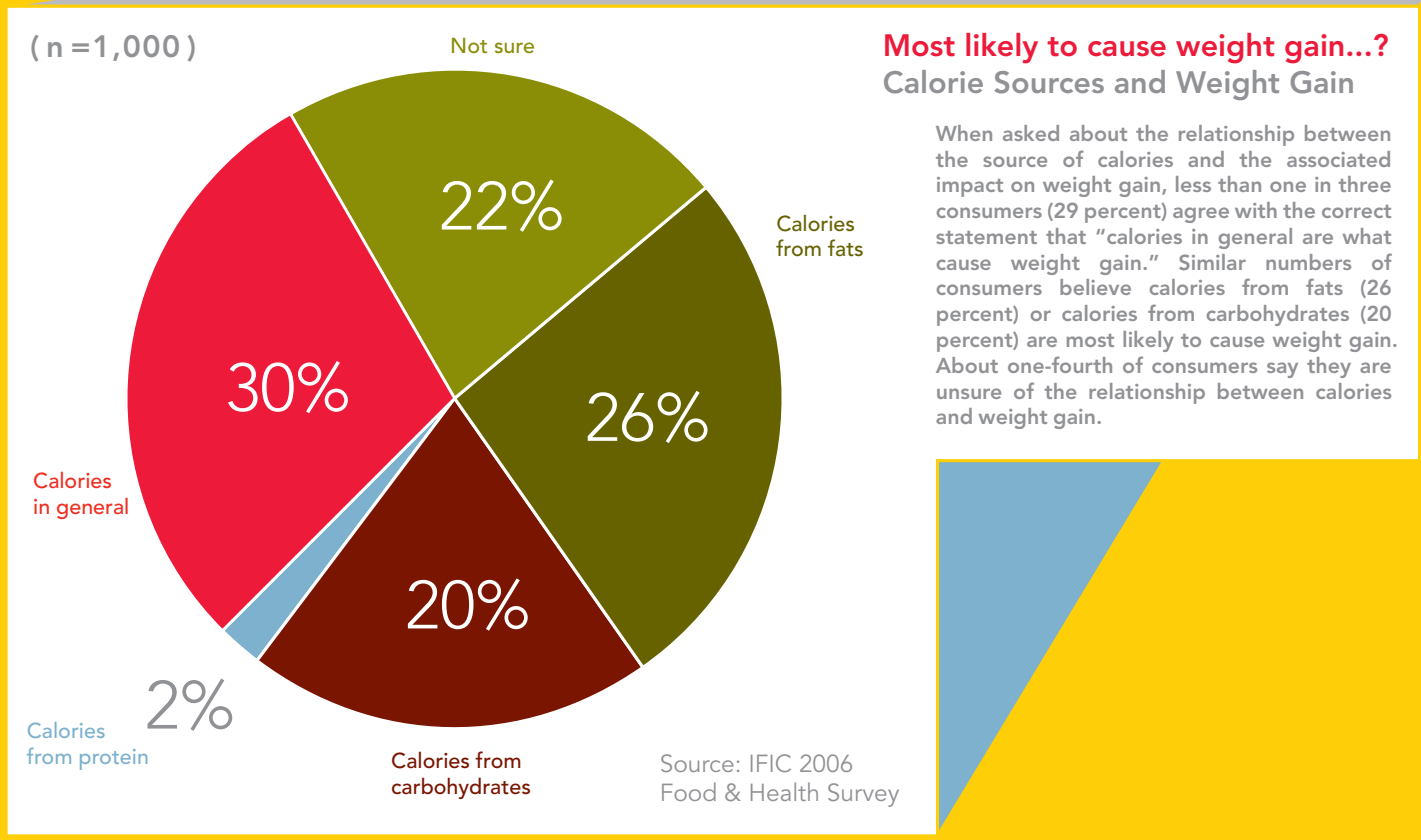
Good health depends on a balance between calories consumed and what we burn off through physical activity. That balance will vary from person to person. It may surprise you to know that the amount of sugar and calories in soft drinks is about the same as found in many fruit juices. A serving of

The European Food Information Council conducted focus groups with consumers in France, Germany, Netherlands and U.K. during October-November 2005 and found some common insights:

- Healthy eating is top of mind among most consumers, with an understanding that food quality and nutritional values are important factors.
- While nutrition labels are considered important and necessary by most consumers, they generally fail to use them when choosing foods or guiding diets.
- Communicating calorie information on food labels is effective and provides a good idea of the overall nutritional value of a food.



- International Food Information Council/American Dietetic Association, 10 tips to healthy eating. Feb. 1998. <http://www.ific.org/publications/brochures/tentipsbroch.cfm>
- International Food Information Council/US FDA, The benefits of balance, managing fat in your diet. Feb. 1998. <http://www.ific.org/publications/brochures/benbalbroch.cfm>



When asked about the relationship between the source of calories and the associated impact on weight gain, less than one in three consumers (29 percent) agree with the correct statement that “calories in general are what cause weight gain.” Similar numbers of consumers believe calories from fats (26 percent) or calories from carbohydrates (20 percent) are most likely to cause weight gain. About one-fourth of consumers say they are unsure of the relationship between calories and weight gain.

