

Question

Does drinking carbonated soft drinks make people gain weight? Isn't this one of the main causes of the current obesity epidemic?

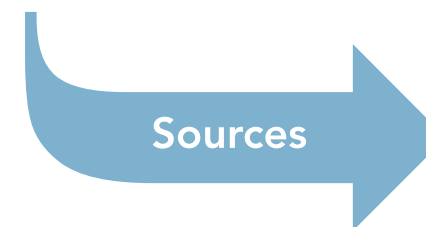
Answer

Neither carbonated soft drinks nor any other single type of food or beverage is responsible for the problems of overweight and obesity. According to the American Dietetic Association, all foods and beverages can have a place in a well-balanced diet, as long as you don't take in more calories than you burn.

Carbonated soft drinks can help quench your thirst and help provide your body with its daily fluid needs, but they should not be the only beverage that people consume. Besides basic hydration, carbonated soft drinks can also provide carbohydrate fuel that supplies energy necessary for daily activities.

In studying the diets of obese people, scientists have not determined that any specific food or beverage is the root cause of weight problems. While a few studies have reported some association between sugar or soft drink consumption and weight gain, many others have not. For overweight people, reducing calories, from any food or beverage source will help control weight, and including physical activity as part of their daily regimen will also help. In fact, to be physically fit you must engage in physical exercise; diet alone will not make you physically fit.

So that people can choose the type of soft drink that best suits their tastes and calorie needs, carbonated soft drinks are now available at several caloric levels: no-calorie, low-calorie, reduced-calorie and regular-calorie. The variety of beverages and package sizes offered by The Coca-Cola Company allows people 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.



- Sigman-Grant MJ and Hsieh G. Reported use of reduced-sugar foods and beverages reflect high-quality diets, *Journal Food Science*, 70:S42-46, 2005.
- Kvaavik E, et al. The stability of soft drinks intake from adolescence to adult age and the association between long-term consumption of soft drinks and lifestyle factors and body weight. *Public Health Nutrition*, 8:149-157, 2005.
- Renwick AG. Intense sweeteners, food intake, and the weight of a body of evidence. *Physiology Behavior*, 55:139-143, 1994.
- Janssen I, et al., Comparison of overweight and obesity prevalence in school-aged youth from 34 countries and their relationships with physical activity and dietary patterns. *Obesity Reviews*, 6:123-132, 2005.

Frequency of Physical Activity

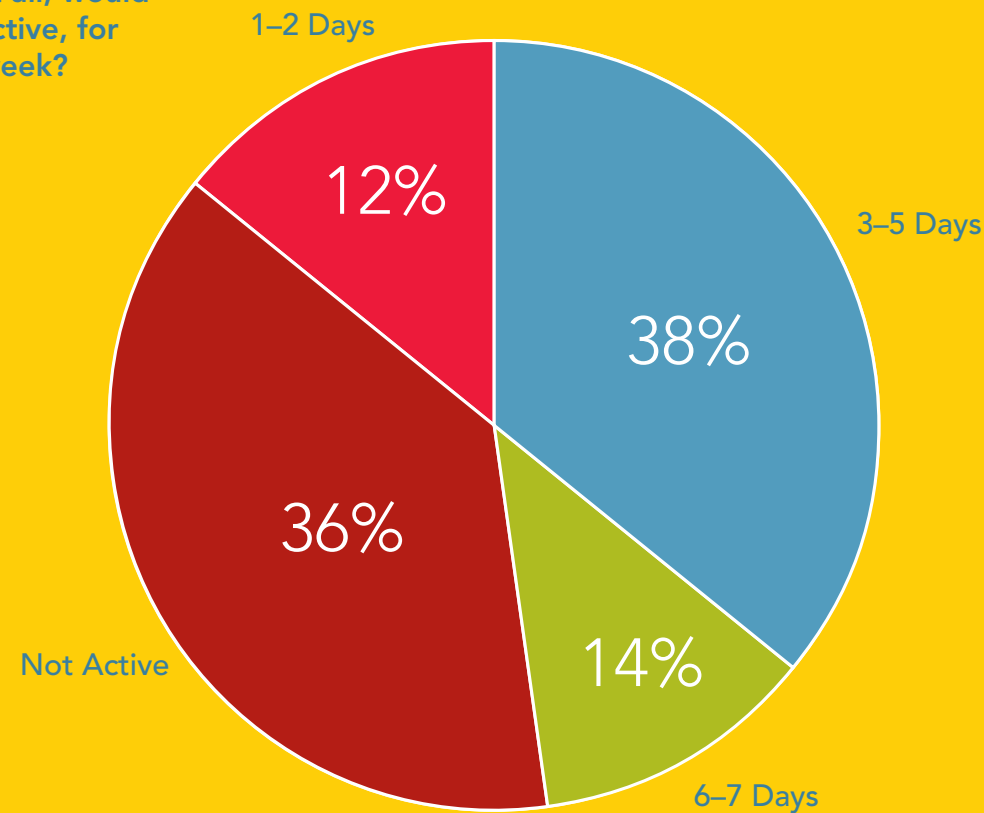
On average, how often, if at all, would you say you are physically active, for health benefits, in a given week?

Those most active (six to seven days) include:

- Men
- Those with a BMI* in the normal or overweight range
- Those who are not concerned with the type of fat they consume

Those who are inactive include:

- Those who describe their health as "fair" or "poor"
- Those who describe their diet as "unhealthful"
- Those with a BMI* in the obese range
- Those with lower education levels
- Those not satisfied with their health status



*BMI calculated from self-reported weight and height and categorized according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standards.

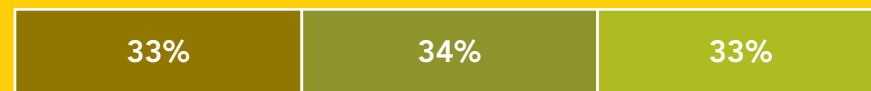
Energy Balance

In general, consumers place nearly equal emphasis on the types and amount of food they consume and their level of physical activity, regardless of whether they are trying to maintain or lose weight.**

When trying to maintain your weight, how much emphasis do you place on the following?



When trying to lose weight, how much emphasis do you place on the following?



Age-related differences show that for both weight loss and maintenance, consumers who are over the age of 34 are more likely to focus on the amount of food/beverages they consume, while consumers under the age of 35 are more likely to focus on physical activity.

- Types of Foods & Beverages
- Amount of Foods & Beverages
- Amount of Physical Activity

**SOURCE: IFIC 2006 Food & Health Survey (n = 1,000)