

## **Taxing Pizza, Soda May Help Cut Weight Gain in Adults**

Ob/Gyn. News

April 2010

Copyright 2010 Elsevier Inc., International Medical News Group All Rights Reserved

**Section:** Pg. 38; Vol. 45; No. 4; ISSN: 0029-7437

**Length:** 452 words

**Byline:** Jane Anderson

### **Body**

---

Taxing soda and restaurant pizza could discourage U.S. adults from consuming those foods, ultimately helping them reduce long-term weight gain and insulin resistance, according to a 20-year longitudinal study.

"National, state, or local policies to alter the price of less healthful foods and beverages may be one possible mechanism for steering U.S. adults toward a more healthful diet," Kiyah J. Duffey, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and associates, concluded (Arch. Intern. Med. 2010;170:420-6).

The team pulled data from the **Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study**, which has tracked various factors reported by adults since 1985, including their diets and the prices they paid for foods.

The new analysis focused on relationships between dietary changes and the prices reported by 5,115 participants at 0, 7, and 20 years.

The study found that a 10% increase in the price of soda (roughly 20 cents per 1-L bottle) resulted in a 3% decline in the probability of consuming soda and a decrease in the amount of soda consumed.

Pizza followed a similar trend. A \$1 increase in the price of both soda and pizza was associated with even greater changes in total energy intake, body weight, and individuals' homeostasis model assessment of insulin resistance scores.

As a result, Dr. Duffey and associates estimated, an 18% tax on soda and fast food could cut energy intake among young to middle-aged adults by about 56 kcal per day.

At the population level, this reduction could lead to about 5 fewer pounds in weight gain per person per year "and significant reductions in the risks of most obesity-related chronic diseases," Dr. Duffey and associates asserted.

In an editorial accompanying the study, Dr. Mitchell Katz, director of San Francisco department of public health, and Dr. Rajiv Bhatia, medical director of San Francisco's division of occupational and environmental health, said that taxes are a fair method to correct for the long-term health costs and other effects of unhealthy foods.

But the two physicians also advocated "agricultural subsidies [to] be used to make healthful foods such as locally grown vegetables, fruits, and whole grains less expensive," rather than the subsidies for corn that make the typical sweetener in soda inexpensive.

Public policy also should encourage the establishment of more supermarkets and farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods, Dr. Katz and Dr. Bhatia said.

## Taxing Pizza, Soda May Help Cut Weight Gain in Adults

**Disclosures:** Dr. Duffey and associates reported no conflicts of interest. Dr. Bhatia reported no conflict of interest, and Dr. Katz reported receiving expenses and consulting payments from the hospital management company Health Management Associates Inc.

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** OBNEWS

**Subject:** ADULTS (90%); NUTRITION (90%); MEDICAL RESEARCH (90%); DIETING (90%); PRICES (89%); TAXES & TAXATION (79%); PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (78%); DISEASES & DISORDERS (78%); TRENDS (78%); OBESITY (78%); HEALTH CARE COSTS (77%); PRICE INCREASES (77%); OBESITY RELATED DISEASES (73%); MIDDLE AGED PERSONS (73%); PUBLIC POLICY (72%); RESEARCH REPORTS (72%); PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS (71%); PUBLIC HEALTH (66%); AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES (64%); LOW INCOME PERSONS (63%); HEALTH DEPARTMENTS (62%); CHRONIC DISEASES (62%); Clinical Rounds (%)

**Company:** HEALTH MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES INC (60%)

**Industry:** FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS (78%); RESTAURANTS (78%); HEALTH CARE COSTS (77%); PRICE INCREASES (77%); PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS (71%); AGRICULTURE (64%); AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES (64%); GROCERY STORES & SUPERMARKETS (63%); HEALTH DEPARTMENTS (62%); HOSPITALS (61%); FRUITS & VEGETABLES (60%)

**Geographic:** NORTH CAROLINA, USA (79%)

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2010