

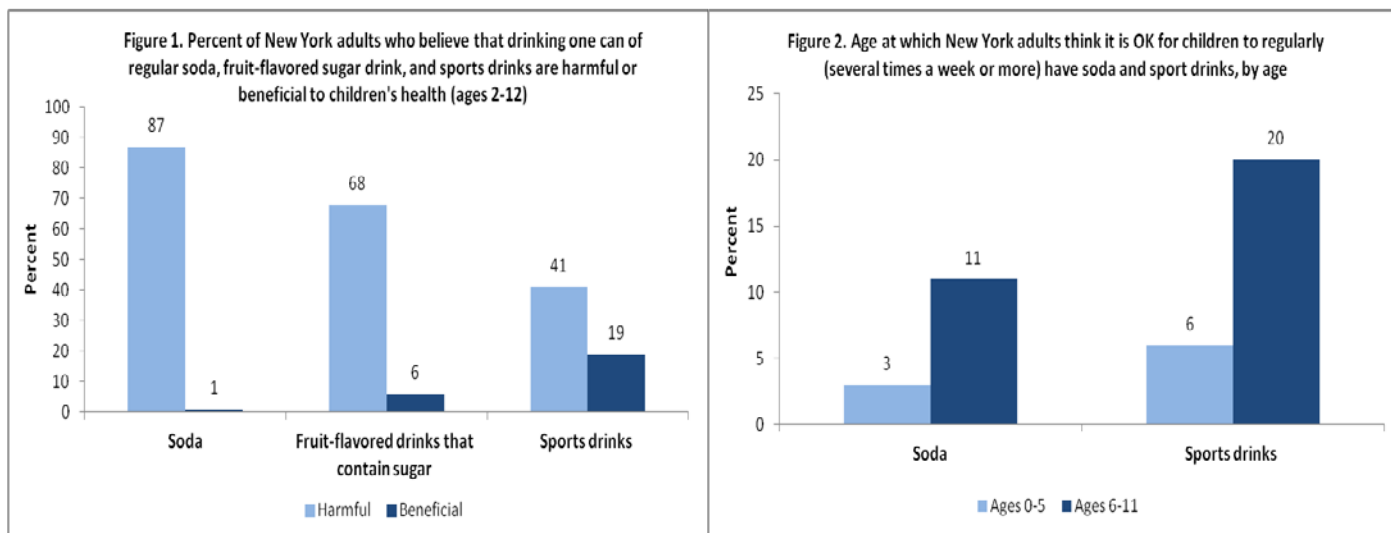
Information for Action # 2013-3

New Yorkers consider sports drinks a healthier choice for children than soda even though sports drinks have similar amounts of sugar.

Daily consumption of sugary drinks is associated with weight gain and obesity in children and adolescents.¹ In New York State (NYS), 24% of children 2-5 years of age and 27% of children 6-11 years of age consume one or more sugary drinks other than soda per day (e.g., sports drinks, fruit drinks, energy drinks and sugar-sweetened iced teas), but only 6% of children 2-11 years of age drink soda daily.² Data from a recent public opinion poll in NYS suggest that adults consider sports drinks to be different than soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages.

- Most adults in NYS recognize that regular consumption of soda (87%) and fruit-flavored drinks (68%) is harmful for children aged 2 to 12 years old. However, only 41% of adults consider regular consumption of sports drinks to be harmful for children (Figure 1).
- One in five adults consider sports drinks to be beneficial for children under 12 years of age (Figure 1).
- Twenty percent of adults consider it acceptable for children 6 to 11 years of age to regularly have sports drinks, but only 6% consider it acceptable for children this age to consume soda regularly (Figure 2).

Although sports drinks manufacturers market their products as a healthy alternative to soda for children, they contain 5-8 teaspoons of sugar per 12-ounce serving and 50-90% of the calories found in the same serving size of soda.¹ According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, water is the best drink choice for most children playing sports or engaged in active play.³



Data Source: NYS Department of Health/Siena College Research Institute public opinion poll, January 2012

PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

- Schools, afterschool programs, and sports teams should provide healthier beverage choices like water instead of sports drinks.
- Pediatricians and coaches can inform parents about the benefits of drinking water instead of sports drinks.
- Organizations working to reduce childhood obesity should explore policy opportunities that limit the marketing of sports drinks to children.

Contact:

For more information about the data included and their specific implications for action, please send an email to DCCIPIFA@health.state.ny.us with the IFA # 2013-3 in the subject line.

References:

1. Vartanian LR, Schwartz MB, Brownell KD. Effects of soft drink consumption on nutrition and health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Am J Public Health.* 2007; 97(4):667-675
2. New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009-2010. Available at: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1203_brfss_sugar_sweetened_beverages.pdf. Accessed September 12, 2012.
3. The Academy of Pediatrics. Clinical report-sports drinks and energy drinks for children and adolescents: are they appropriate? *Pediatrics* 2011;127(6):1182-1189.

