

Rethinking Our Drink:

Results of the Soda-Free Summer Campaign in Santa Clara County



What was the Soda-Free Summer Campaign?

The Soda-Free Summer Campaign began as a pilot program in Summer 2007 that sought to reduce sugary drink consumption, which is a major contributor to obesity and diabetes. Since then, the Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANCPAC) has expanded the effort to include six Bay Area counties, including Santa Clara County.

At a variety of locations and events across Santa Clara County during the months of June, July, and August, 2010, families were invited to participate in this year's Soda-Free Summer Campaign. Participants were given a pledge card urging them to make a commitment to "re-think their drink" and agree to take action to improve their own health and the health of their family, school, workplace, and/or community. Families with children were given a free book, "Drink Water Said the Otter" to encourage and reinforce their commitment to making healthy beverage choices.

SODA FREE SUMMER PLEDGE OPTIONS

Make a Commitment to a Healthier You!

Check one or more actions below. Send in this card for next steps you can take and be entered into a raffle for great prizes.

- I pledge to be soda-free!
- I pledge to keep my family healthy by reducing sugary drinks and foods at home.
- I pledge to help make my school, workplace or community a place with healthy beverage choices.
- I support policies that limit access to sugary drinks and foods.

A total of 448 pledge cards were signed and collected from Santa Clara County residents at locations that included Kaiser Permanente pediatricians' offices, the Festival in the Park health fair, and various community centers, churches, clinics, Family Resource Centers, and Family Harvest sites throughout the county. Participants were enthusiastic about the campaign - most of them (67%) made multiple commitments to healthier food and beverages choices, and 61 percent

indicated they supported policies limiting access to sugary drinks and foods.

How Successful Were Families in Making Healthy Changes?

In late August through early September, follow-up telephone and internet surveys were conducted with 141 of the participants who completed a Soda-Free Summer pledge card¹ to see how successful they had been with their commitments to healthy choices.

The average age of the follow-up survey respondents was just under 35 years old. Most respondents were women (90%), and they were most often from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds (89%). Ninety percent of the respondents had one or more children younger than 11 years old living at home with them.

¹ American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Response Rate 2 = 47.3%.

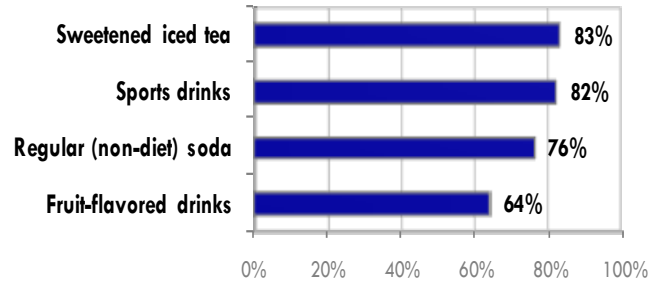
✓ **Most parents reported that their children drank no sugary drinks in the past 7 days.**

Parents who participated in the Soda-Free Summer Campaign were questioned about their children’s consumption of different types of sugary drinks over the last seven days. Across a variety of types of drinks, most parents indicated that their child had not had any over the previous seven days.

In addition, when asked about changes they had made to their child(ren)’s eating and drinking over the past 3 weeks:

- Just over half of the survey respondents (52%) stated that they had had their child drink more water.
- Forty-four percent had made changes to their child(ren)’s eating to reduce their consumption of sugary foods.
- Forty-eight percent had had their child eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Forty-four percent reported reducing the amount of fat in their child(ren)’s diet.

Percentage of respondents whose children completely refrained from drinking different sugary drinks in the last 7 days

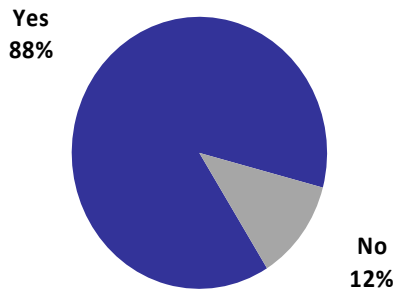


Source: Soda Free Summer Follow-Up Survey, Aug-Sept 2010.
Note: Sample size = 123-124.

✓ **Respondents also reported making changes in their own beverage choices.**

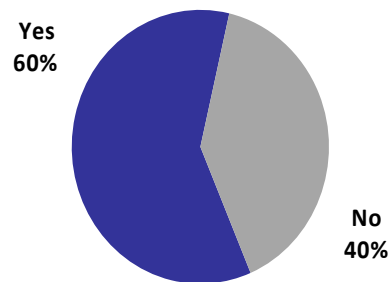
In addition to making healthy improvements to their children’s food and beverage consumption, most of the Soda-Free Summer Campaign participants who were reached at follow-up reported making other healthy changes as well during the past three weeks.

Did you reduce your own soda or sugary drink consumption?



Source: Soda Free Summer Follow-Up Survey, Aug-Sept 2010.
Note: Sample size = 134.

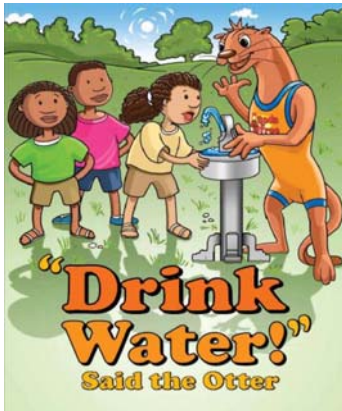
Did you take steps to make your school, workplace, or community a place with healthy beverage choices?



Source: Soda Free Summer Follow-Up Survey, Aug-Sept 2010.
Note: Sample size = 134.

In the three weeks prior to completion of the follow-up survey, 88 percent of Soda-Free Summer participants reported reducing their own soda or sugary drink consumption, and 60 percent had taken some action to try to make their school, workplace, or community a place with healthy beverage choices. These actions most often included things like encouraging others to drink water and telling people about how unhealthy it is to drink soda.

- ✓ **The free book “Drink Water Said the Otter” that was given out to participating families helped to reinforce the soda-free summer message.**



When survey participants were asked to describe what their biggest challenges had been in being soda-free themselves or helping their child(ren) be soda-free, the most common response was that it was difficult to break established habits. Several people also indicated that they faced difficulties when they were in social situations such as gatherings and parties.

Families found the book given as an incentive to participate in the campaign to be helpful, however. More than half (54%) of the participating families with children under age 11 reported that the book “Drink Water Said the Otter” had had “a big impact” on their family’s drink choices.

Summary

The 2010 Soda-Free Summer Campaign in Santa Clara County was successful in getting county residents to “rethink their drink” - both their own soda consumption and the drinks and foods they were serving their children. Participants in the campaign also reported high levels of taking action in their schools workplaces, and communities to help them become places where healthy beverage choices were available.

Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Public Health Department



For more information and a complete summary of the Soda-Free Summer Campaign follow-up survey questions and responses, please contact Lori Martin, Santa Clara County Public Health Department (Lori.Martin@PHD.SCCGOV.ORG); Elizabeth Sills, Kaiser Permanente San Jose (Elizabeth.Sills@kp.org); or Joanne Seavey-Hultquist, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County (Joanne@FIRST5KIDS.ORG).