

JUST SAY "NO" -- TO SODA

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(More information can be found at <http://foodfitnessbyphone.com/articles/soy.htm>)

Sweet, sparkling, empty-calorie soda pop has become America's favorite drink. In just the last 50 years, soda consumption has increased by over 500%.

Mass advertising and availability is at the root of this mass intake of liquid candy. And contractual agreements with public schools and recreational facilities are some of the most lucrative venues. **Soft drinks are now sold in over 60% of public schools.** It's no wonder when you consider that the profit margin on soda is 90%.

This is great for the soda manufacturers, but poses increasing health risks for the children and adults who are guzzling it down in ever increasing amounts.

In the summer of 2003, Kelly Hayford spoke before the Denver Public School Board, making a plea to not renew their contract with Pepsi. The board was split on the issue and, unfortunately, it passed by one vote.

Before you cast your vote in favor of regular soda consumption in your household, work place, or local school, consider the plea she made to the Denver school board. As you read, keep in mind, that although the statistics cited are for children, parallel statistics exist for the adult population as well.

[Here is her 3 minute allotted speech to the school board:](#)

We are now the fattest country in the world. The rate of obesity among our children alone -- has tripled in the last two decades.

The same two decades in which soda consumption among children has tripled for boys and doubled for girls.

The same decade in which mass marketing campaigns and the mass availability of soft drinks has been introduced into the public school systems.

According to a study recently cited in the Lancet Medical Journal, **drinking one soda or sweetened beverage a day -- increases the risk for obesity among children by 60%.**

In addition, soda consumption puts children at risk for learning and behavioral disorders and Type 2 diabetes. Previously known as "adult onset" diabetes, because it rarely struck those under the age of 50, Type 2 diabetes has now reached epidemic proportions among children over the past decade.

In response to the frequently voiced argument that students are free to choose whether or not they drink soda; certainly there exist many choices that students are free to make and yet, are not allowed on school grounds. **The question is not whether or not children are free to make the choice to drink soda; the question is does this choice put them at risk?**

With the positions you hold comes the obligation to protect the welfare of the children you serve. The promotion of soda consumption with its inherent health risks is clearly a violation of this obligation.

If you extend the contract with Pepsi -- from this day forward, the sight of every obese, overweight, diabetic or behaviorally challenged child will weigh heavy on your mind. And if the past decade is any indication of what's to come, there will be many.

If instead you forgo the contract, you will look into the eyes of these same children and feel confident that you have done right by them. I implore you NOT to extend the contract with Pepsi. Do it for the children, do it for yourselves -- do it for the future of our nation.

Administrators cite budget cuts in defense of their decision to compromise our children's health. It's difficult to swallow this excuse when the local news flashes stories about \$6 million dollar park renovations to include a new ice rink and fountain and a \$30 million dollar new sports stadium to include the latest technology score boards. **It's about priorities, not budget cuts.** There is plenty of money floating around. Our children and our health have just become low priorities.

Whether you have children or not, whether you drink soda or not, this is a societal issue that affects all of us. Individual values are what ultimately drive social values. I encourage you as an individual to put a high priority on your health, and the health of our children. **You can start by just saying no to soda pop!**

It's a choice that affects you today and tomorrow.