

Changes in Consumption of Foods and Beverages With Added Sugars During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among US Adults

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Objectives: To examine changes in intake of foods and beverages with added sugars during the COVID-19 pandemic among US adults to understand groups at risk for decreasing dietary quality.

Methods: We used *SummerStyles* data collected in June 2020 (3,916 US adults, ≥ 18 y). The outcome was the reported frequency of 1) consuming more unhealthy snacks and desserts including chips, cookies, and ice cream and 2) drinking more sugary drinks like regular soda, fruit drinks, sports/energy drinks, sweetened coffee/teas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses were categorized as *Never/Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often/Always*. Exposure variables were sociodemographics, currently having children (< 18 y), weight status, and Census regions. Multinomial regressions were used to estimate adjusted odds ratios (OR) for *Sometimes* or *Often/Always* consuming more unhealthy snacks/desserts (vs. *Never/Rarely*); and *Sometimes* or *Often/Always* more sugary drinks (vs. *Never/Rarely*).

Results: 36% of adults reported *Sometimes* consuming more unhealthy snacks/desserts; 16% did so *Often/Always*. 22% of adults reported *Sometimes* drinking more sugary drinks; 10% did so *Often/Always*. Factors significantly associated with higher odds of reporting *Often/Always* consuming more unhealthy snacks/desserts were younger adults (OR range = 1.51–2.86 vs. adults ≥ 65 y), females (OR = 1.58), non-Hispanic (NH) Black (OR = 1.89 vs. NH White), lower household income (OR = 2.01 for $< \$35$ K vs. $\geq \$100$ K), and obesity (OR = 1.56 vs. underweight/healthy weight). Factors significantly associated with odds of *Often/Always* drinking more sugary drinks were being younger (OR range = 2.26–4.39 vs. adults ≥ 65 y), NH Black (OR = 3.25), Hispanic (OR = 1.75), NH other (OR = 2.41 vs. NH White), lower education (OR = 2.03 for \leq high school; OR = 1.80 for some college vs. college graduate), lower household income (OR range = 1.64–3.15 vs. $\geq \$100$ k), and obesity (OR = 1.61 vs. underweight/healthy weight).

Conclusions: Consuming more foods and beverages with added sugars during the pandemic was higher in younger adults, racial/ethnic minority groups, lower-income adults, and adults with obesity. Dietary changes such as these may impact metabolic health if continued long-term. Implementing strategies to ensure these dietary changes are not permanent may benefit future health.

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