

## ‘Sugar and Spice and all things nice’

In CensusAtSchool we asked students how many cans and bottles of soft drinks they had drunk in the previous two days. Our 31,361 secondary pupils drank 144,196 cans and bottles in two days. That is an average of 1.6 cans and 2.9 bottles every two days. We did not ask how many of these were ‘diet’ versions, but perhaps we should have, given the very high sugar content of the non ‘diet’ varieties.



One normal sized can of cola for example contains nearly 11 teaspoons of sugar while the average healthy digestive system can digest and eliminate 2 to 4 teaspoons daily. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) advises people who eat a 2,000-calorie healthy diet to try to limit themselves to about 10 teaspoons of added sugars per day. In fact, the average American does *not* eat a healthful diet, but consumes 20 teaspoons of added sugars per day.

Study the following three sources:

### Source 1

Since the eighteenth century, the rise in the per capita consumption of sugar has been closely associated with industrialization, increased personal income, the use of processed foods, and the consumption of beverages to which people add sugar, such as tea, coffee, and cocoa. In addition, the relatively recent popularity of soft drinks has also expanded the use of sugar. Annual per capita sugar consumption is now highest in its places of production, such as Brazil, Fiji, and Australia, where it exceeds 50 kilograms (kg). Consumption in Cuba has been exceptionally high, exceeding 80 kg per capita around the beginning of the 1990s. Subsequently, consumption has fallen to a still very high 60 kg per person.

With an annual per capita consumption of between 30 and 40 kg, the countries that were first industrialized in Western Europe and North America constitute a second tier of sugar consumers. The poorer countries of the world make up a third group where consumption is low. The figure for China is 6.5 kg, and it is even lower for many countries in tropical Africa. Such a pattern reflects both differences in wealth and the ready availability of sugar to those in the countries of the first group. In the Western industrialized world, concerns about the effects of sugar on health, as well as the use of alternatives to sugar — such as high-fructose corn syrup and high-intensity, low-calorie sweeteners — have stabilized and, in some countries, lowered the use of sugar.

Source - The Cambridge World History of Food – Kiple & Ornelas (2000) published by CUP



### Source 2

#### Americans' Sugar Consumption is Questioned Thursday 20 May 1999

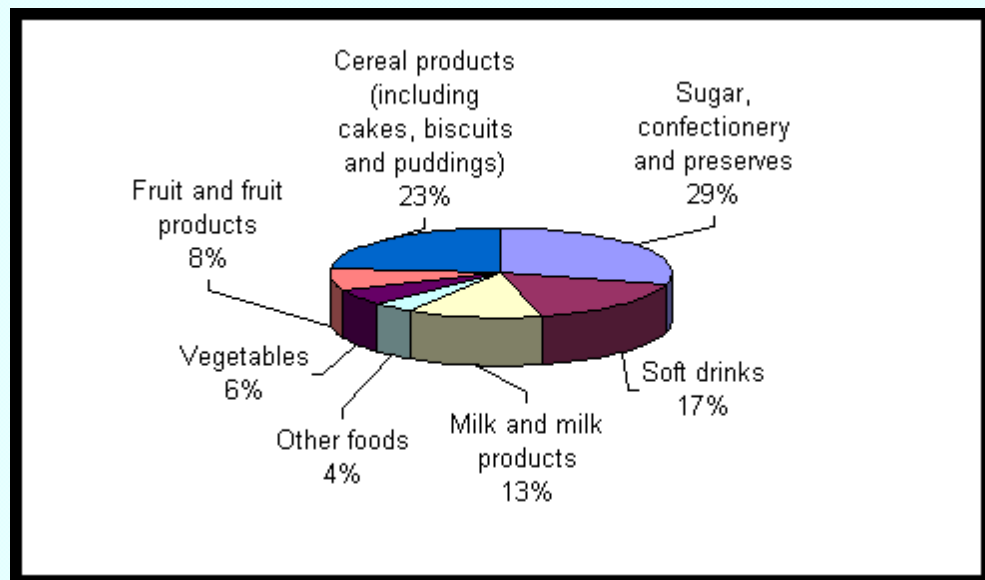
If you haven't settled on a habit to kick this month, leading health and nutrition experts are on hand to help you out. In a letter to the secretaries of the Departments of Health and Agriculture, a panel of scientists has urged the commissioning of a study on sugar consumption in the US. According to Michael Jacobson of the Centre for Science in the Public

Interest (CSPI), sugar accounts for about 16 percent of total calories consumed by adults, and 20 percent of calories consumed by teenagers.

Sugary soft drinks account for a good portion of sugar consumption, especially among teenagers. Some studies suggest that teenage girls and women, who frequently replace milk with soft drinks, run an increased risk of osteoporosis. Many Americans, focusing on fat as the chief dietary enemy, are not paying sufficient attention to the empty calories found in sugary snacks. "It's time to rethink our national infatuation with sweets," said Jacobson.

This story appeared in Fox News Online.

### Source 3



*Sources of sugars in the British diet*

Gregory J, Foster K, Tyler H, Wiseman M. *The Dietary and Nutritional Survey of British Adults*. London: HMSO, 1990.

Now use the following two websites to investigate how much sugar you consume every week and what types of foods it tends to come from

<http://www.fitnesscomplete.co.uk/chapters/hn/sugar.htm>

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=3797>