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“Liquid candy” needs health warnings

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0507/050715-soda.html>

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15 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

"Liquid candy" needs health warnings

BNE: Soft drinks that are almost saturated with sugar may soon have health warnings similar to those on cigarette packets. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has issued a press release calling for the compulsory labeling of soda. It declares carbonated beverages are an ever-increasing menace to our health. CSPI director Michael Jacobson warned on a TV chat show that: "Americans are drowning in soda pop", which he described as a "worthless" product. He complained that: "the government's dietary guidelines...have urged people to consume less sweetened beverages", but have not been implemented by follow-up measures. He stressed the need for urgent action by reminding the public that "obesity is an epidemic".

The title of the press release refers to soda as "liquid candy". It disturbingly reports that teenagers consume an average of three cans of soda a day, which constitutes 15 per cent of their required calorie intake. Mr. Jacobson asked the pertinent question: "How did a solution of high-fructose corn syrup, water, and artificial flavors come to be the default beverage?" He implored the Government to require soft drink manufacturers to label their products, to warn kids that soda results in obesity, dental problems and brittle bones. CSPI also said that caffeinated drinks should bear a notice that reads "not appropriate for children".

Source: <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200507131.html>

WARM-UPS

1. SODA HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history and present regarding soda. When did you first start drinking it? What's your favorite? How often do you drink it? How important is it to you? Could you stop drinking it?

2. QUICK ROLE PLAY: Students A are the bosses of soda companies. You don't care about the health hazards of cola and other sodas. You only care about profits. Students B are nutritionists. You think colas and sodas are a serious threat to health. In pairs, role play a discussion between manufacturers and nutritionists.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Soft drinks / sugar / health warnings / health hazards / obesity / liquid candy / cans of soda / calorie intake / dental problems / caffeine / not for kids

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. SODA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "soda". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. FIZZY OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, discuss how far you agree with these opinions on soft / fizzy drinks:

- a. Soda should be banned worldwide.
- b. People know that soda isn't healthy. If they drink it, that's their choice.
- c. There should be labels on soda products warning of the dangers to our health.
- d. Drink manufacturers deliberately target kids – that's wrong.
- e. There's nothing better than in ice cold Coke (or Pepsi) on a hot day.
- f. Kids who drink too much soda have irresponsible parents.
- g. The crazy thing is that many schools serve soda with school lunches.
- h. It's the usual problem. Anything in moderation is OK.
- i. People who become obese from drinking soda should sue the soda companies.
- j. You cannot place restrictions on kids drinking soda. It's part of growing up.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A new product called "liquid candy" has come onto the market. | T / F |
| b. A health advisory group wants soda to carry health warnings. | T / F |
| c. Some Americans drown in soda every year. | T / F |
| d. The Government has done little to regulate soda companies. | T / F |
| e. U.S. teens drink an average of 3 cans of soda a day. | T / F |
| f. Three sodas a day represents 50% of required daily calorie intake. | T / F |
| g. Drinking too much soda leads to brittle bones. | T / F |
| h. The health advisory group says soda is inappropriate for kids. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| a. saturated | automatically-chosen |
| b. compulsory | plague |
| c. menace | executed |
| d. implemented | mandatory |
| e. epidemic | makes up |
| f. constitutes | carry |
| g. solution | loaded |
| h. default | weak |
| i. brittle | peril |
| j. bear | mixture |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. saturated | as "liquid candy" |
| b. calling | follow-up measures |
| c. an ever-increasing | a notice |
| d. have not implemented | for the compulsory labeling of soda |
| e. obesity | of their required calorie intake |
| f. the press release refers to soda | bones |
| g. which constitutes 15 per cent | with sugar |
| h. artificial | is an epidemic |
| i. brittle | flavors |
| j. caffeinated drinks should bear | menace to our health |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

"Liquid candy" needs health warnings

BNE: Soft drinks that are almost ____ with sugar may soon have health warnings similar to those on cigarette packets. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has issued a press release calling for the ____ labeling of soda. It declares carbonated beverages are an ever-increasing ____ to our health. CSPI director Michael Jacobson warned on a TV chat show that: "Americans are drowning in soda pop", which he described as a "worthless" product. He complained that: "the government's dietary guidelines...have urged people to consume less sweetened beverages", but have not been ____ by follow-up measures. He stressed the need for urgent action by reminding the public that "obesity is an epidemic".

The title of the press release refers to soda as "liquid candy". It disturbingly reports that teenagers ____ an average of three cans of soda a day, which ____ 15 per cent of their required calorie intake. Mr. Jacobson asked the pertinent question: "How did a ____ of high-fructose corn syrup, water, and artificial flavors come to be the default beverage?" He ____ the Government to require soft drink manufacturers to label their products, to warn kids that soda results in obesity, dental problems and brittle bones. CSPI also said that caffeinated drinks should bear a notice that reads "not appropriate for children".

1
implemented
executed
enforced
carried out

2
consume
guzzle
down
polish off

3
saturated
loaded
permeated
soaked

4
solution
mixture
concoction
compound

5
menace
peril
hazard
threat

6
implored
entreated
beseeched
urged

7
constitutes
makes up
comprises
forms

8
obligatory
mandatory
compulsory
enforced

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'liquid' and 'candy'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT SODA SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about soda, nutrition and health.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| • saturated | • title |
| • ever-increasing | • constitutes |
| • drowning | • solution |
| • guidelines | • default |
| • follow-up | • warn |
| • epidemic | • brittle |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about sodas?
- d. Does soda play a big part in your life?
- e. Are you surprised that the average American kid drinks three cans of soda a day?
- f. Do you worry that colas are caffeinated?
- g. Do you ever think about the nutritional value of carbonated drinks?
- h. Do you think kids in your country are "drowning in soda"?
- i. Should your government provide more guidelines on soda?
- j. Is obesity a big problem for kids in your country?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of the CSPI request for labeling?
- d. Whose fault is it that kids drink too much soda?
- e. How much soda is acceptable?
- f. Do you think soda is a "worthless" product?
- g. Do you think there are any benefits to drinking soda?
- h. Which is best, Coke or Pepsi?
- i. Do you think it would be easy to make kids switch from soda to fruit juice, milk or healthy beverages?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not to label sodas or regulate their sale. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A – Teenage kids

You love soda. There's no way you want to give it up. You don't care about calories – you play sport. It's your body and your choice. You hate healthy drinks. Soda is delicious. It's part of your culture. It gives you energy. Health warnings and labeling are ridiculous ideas.

Think of other reasons with your "team" why soda is the best.

Role B – Worried parent

You are worried about your child's health. He has dental problems. He's overweight. He never eats or drinks anything that's healthy. You think soda companies and their advertising are evil. Soda doesn't have a single benefit for anyone, except soda company bosses. Labeling is necessary.

Think of other reasons with your "team" why soda is evil.

Role C – Drinks manufacturer

Kids are intelligent enough to make considered choices. If kids drink "too much" soda, that's their parents' fault. You make soft drinks. You are not in the health industry. Your drinks provide energy. If soda is labeled, chocolate and other products should be labeled too.

Think of other reasons with your "team" why soda is totally harmless.

Role D – CSPI boss

It's obvious soda is harmful. It's clear soda leads to obesity. It's a crime that soda companies spend so time targeting kids. Soda manufacturers lie about their products. The government must make soda companies label their product AND tax soda – to pay for hospital costs of obesity.

Think of other reasons with your "team" why soda should bear health warnings.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

"Liquid candy" needs health warnings

BNE: Soft drinks that are almost _____ sugar may soon have health warnings similar to those on cigarette packets. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has issued a press release calling for the _____ labeling of soda. It declares _____ beverages are an ever-increasing _____ to our health. CSPI director Michael Jacobson warned on a TV chat show that: "Americans _____ soda pop", which he described as a "worthless" product. He complained that: "the government's _____ guidelines...have urged people to consume less sweetened beverages", but have not been _____ by follow-up measures. He stressed the need for urgent action by reminding the public that "_____ is an epidemic".

The title of the press release refers to soda as "liquid candy". It _____ reports that teenagers _____ an average of three cans of soda a day, which constitutes 15 per cent of their required _____. Mr. Jacobson asked the pertinent question: "How did _____ high-fructose corn syrup, water, and artificial flavors come to be the _____ beverage?" He implored the Government to require soft drink manufacturers to label their products, to warn kids that soda results in obesity, dental problems and _____. CSPI also said that caffeinated drinks should _____ that reads "not appropriate for children".

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the nutritional benefits and dangers of sodas. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. SODA OR JUICE?: Carry out a survey among the people you know asking them whether they prefer soda or juice. Be sure to ask different questions about soda and juice. Report your findings to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of the Center for Science in the Public Interest to tell him what you think of his call for the labeling of soda. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. saturated	loaded
b. compulsory	mandatory
c. menace	peril
d. implemented	executed
e. epidemic	plague
f. constitutes	makes up
g. solution	mixture
h. default	automatically-chosen
i. brittle	weak
j. bear	carry

PHRASE MATCH:

a. saturated	with sugar
b. calling	for the compulsory labeling of soda
c. an ever-increasing	menace to our health
d. have not implemented	follow-up measures
e. obesity	is an epidemic
f. the press release refers to soda	as "liquid candy"
g. which constitutes 15 per cent	of their required calorie intake
h. artificial	flavors
i. brittle	bones
j. caffeinated drinks should bear	a notice

SYNONYM FILL:

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The title of the press release refers to soda as "liquid candy". It disturbingly reports that teenagers ---2--- an average of three cans of soda a day, which ---7--- 15 per cent of their required calorie intake. Mr. Jacobson asked the pertinent question: "How did a ---4--- of high-fructose corn syrup, water, and artificial flavors come to be the default beverage?" He ---6--- the Government to require soft drink manufacturers to label their products, to warn kids that soda results in obesity, dental problems and brittle bones. CSPI also said that caffeinated drinks should bear a notice that reads "not appropriate for children".