

Study: Middle school students prefer soda

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A Harvard School of Public Health study has found that children at Massachusetts's middle schools buy soda more often than other items from vending machines.

The study, published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, found that students at the 10 schools bought soda and other sugar-sweetened drinks three times more often than any other vending machine items, WebMD reported Thursday.

The researchers found that 646 students used school vending machines in the space of a week. Of those students, 71 percent reported buying sugar-sweetened sodas or other beverages. A total 68 percent of the 505 students who reported using the machines two or three times purchased soda drinks and 79 percent of the 141 students who bought four or more items included soda in their purchases.

The researchers said their study also suggests that children who eat at fast-food restaurants are also more likely to drink sugar-sweetened beverages.

"These findings suggest that school vending machines and fast-food restaurants make independent contributions to total (sugar-sweetened beverage) intake that increase with repeated exposure or use," the study said.

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