

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This poll was conducted from February 14 through 18, 2011, by the Center for Rural Studies, located within the University of Vermont. It was conducted on behalf of the Vermont Campaign for Health Care Security Education Fund with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

A total of 508 completed responses were generated (unless otherwise noted). This number of responses provides a confidence level of 95 percent with a confidence interval (margin of error) of +/-4.34 percent for Vermont’s population of about 625,741 (Census 2010). In lay terms, this means that 95% of the time these questions are asked of Vermonters, the responses received would fall within +/-4.34 percent of the rates found in this report.

QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion what would you say are three important health issues facing Vermonters these days?

A list of volunteered responses can be provided upon request.

2. Okay, thank you for those responses. Now I’m going to ask you a question about obesity in Vermont. How serious would you say the problem of childhood obesity is in Vermont? Would you say it is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious or not serious at all?

Response	Percent
Very serious	38.6
Somewhat serious	49.2
Not very serious	6.1
Not serious at all	1.4
Don’t know/Refused	4.7

3. Now I’m going to ask you some questions about a proposed tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. Some legislators in Vermont are proposing a one cent per ounce tax on sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages such as sweetened teas and sports and energy drinks. Do you support, oppose, or have no opinion about this proposed sugar-sweetened beverage tax? (Follow-up question: Do you somewhat support or strong support this proposal?/Do you somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this proposal?)

Response	Percent
Strongly support	27.2
Somewhat support	14.8
Somewhat oppose	13.4
Strongly oppose	27.6
Have no opinion	14.6
Don’t know/Refused	2.4

4. As you may have heard, Vermont has a budget deficit of about \$170 million. Some state legislators have proposed tax changes to reduce this deficit. I am going to read you a list of these proposed changes. After each, please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose that change.

Options (randomized)	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don’t know/Refused
Raising income taxes for households earning \$250,000 or more per year	56.9	21.5	7.1	11.4	3.2
Taxing sugar-sweetened beverages, such as non-diet sodas, sweetened teas and sports	31.3	18.1	17.1	27.8	5.7

and energy drinks					
Taxing fees charged by lawyers, accountants or landscapers	8.3	19.3	18.5	46.7	7.3
Taxing fees charged by doctors and hospitals	4.1	6.3	15.4	68.7	5.5

5. As I said before, Vermont has a budget deficit of about \$170 million. As a result, many programs may get their funding cut. The proposed sugar-sweetened beverage tax could raise up to \$30 million to reduce budget cuts to some of these programs. I'm going to read you a list of proposed cuts. After each, please tell me whether you would support or oppose the sugar-sweetened beverage tax if it reduced this cut.

Options (randomized)	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know/ Refused
Reduce cuts to long-term care for homebound senior citizens	51.8	13.8	8.1	20.7	5.7
Reduce increases in health insurance costs for low- and middle-income Vermonters	49.4	18.7	7.1	17.9	6.9
Reduce cuts to substance abuse programs for youth	39.0	19.9	12.6	21.7	6.9
Reduce cuts to how much the state health insurance program pays doctors for office visits	29.3	21.3	13.2	23.4	12.8
Reduce cuts to programs that help people quit smoking	27.0	22.8	13.2	30.3	6.7

6. Now imagine for a moment that Vermont did not have a budget deficit and officials in Vermont passed the sugar-sweetened beverage tax. As I said before, the sugar-sweetened beverage tax could raise up to \$30 million. I'm going to read you a list of proposed ways to use this new money. After each, please tell me if you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the sugar-sweetened beverage tax for that use.

Options (randomized)	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know/ Refused
Make health care programs for low- and middle-income children, such as Dr. Dinosaur, more affordable	60.6	16.7	3.9	14.0	4.7
Make health care programs for low- and middle-income adults, such as Catamount Health, more affordable	55.5	20.7	5.3	13.6	4.9
Provide more funding for oral health programs for low- and middle-income children	53.3	23.8	4.3	14.4	4.2
Provide more funding for school lunch programs for low- and middle-income children	50.6	22.8	6.3	15.4	4.9
Make food assistance more available to low- and middle-income Vermonters	48.8	23.8	6.9	15.9	4.6
Provide education about the health risks of being overweight to more Vermonters	36.6	24.0	11.0	23.0	5.3

7. Now I am going to read you a list of reasons why some people support a sugar-sweetened beverage tax. After each, tell me whether that reason is very convincing to you, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not convincing at all.

Options (randomized)	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not very convincing	Not convincing at all	Don't know/ Refused
Obesity often leads to serious health conditions such as diabetes, stroke and heart disease. These health conditions cost Vermont taxpayers about \$141 million each year. Research has shown that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages	39.4	25.2	10.2	21.3	4.0

can reduce obesity rates.					
Research has shown the more sugar-sweetened beverages children drink, the more likely they are to become obese. Research has also shown that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages can reduce obesity rates in children.	34.4	28.1	10.6	22.4	4.4
Twenty-seven percent of Vermont teenagers and pre-teens are overweight. Thirteen percent are obese. Research has shown that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages can reduce obesity rates in children.	29.1	29.1	12.8	25.0	4.0
Adult obesity in Vermont has doubled in the past twenty years. Fifty-nine percent of adults are overweight and 23 percent are obese. Research has shown that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages can reduce obesity rates.	28.5	26.0	15.0	26.2	4.3

8. Now I'm going to see whether these arguments have changed your opinion of the sugar-sweetened beverage tax. As I said before, some legislators in Vermont are proposing a one cent per ounce tax on sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages such as sweetened teas and sports and energy drinks. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose, or have no opinion about this sugar-sweetened beverage tax proposal?

Response	Percent
Strongly support	36.2
Somewhat support	21.5
Somewhat oppose	10.6
Strongly oppose	25.2
Have no opinion	4.5
Don't know/Refused	2.0

9. Please tell me if you find the following groups to be very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, somewhat untrustworthy, or not at all trustworthy when it comes to providing information about the sugar-sweetened beverage tax.*

Options (randomized)	Very trustworthy	Somewhat trustworthy	Somewhat untrustworthy	Not at all trustworthy	Don't know/Refused
Nurses and doctors	64.4	24.1	2.5	2.3	6.8
Health advocacy groups	40.1	36.7	7.7	6.5	9.1
Grocery store owners	6.8	27.9	26.1	30.6	8.5
Gas station owners	5.4	17.6	23.0	41.7	12.4
Soda and beverage companies	4.3	14.9	14.9	57.4	8.6
Out-of-state soda company executives	2.5	9.9	12.4	65.1	10.1

*Due to a technology issue during the first night of calling, the responses for this question set were not appropriately recorded. A total of 444 completed responses were collected for this question set compared to 508 for all others. The data in this question set are statistically significant to 95% confidence level and +/- 4.65 confidence interval (margin of error).

10. We're almost done now. I just have a few more questions about how you buy sugar-sweetened beverages. Have you bought a sugar-sweetened beverage such as a non-diet soda, sweetened tea, sports or energy drink in the past month?

Response	Percent
Yes	35.8
No	64.2

Questions 11 through 20 were asked only of those who had bought a sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) in the past month.

11. Which option best describes how often you drink sugar-sweetened beverages?

Response	Percent
I drink sugar-sweetened beverages every day	14.3
I drink sugar-sweetened beverages two to three times per week	28.0
I drink sugar-sweetened beverages two to three times per month	28.0
I rarely or never drink sugar-sweetened beverages	29.7

Question 12 was asked only of those who reported drinking sugar-sweetened beverages every day.

12. About how many cans would you say you drink per day? (Open response)

Response	Percent
1.0	26.9
1.5	3.8
2.0	46.2
2.8	3.8
3.0	3.8
4.0	7.7
6.0	3.8
10.0	3.8

Question 13 was asked only of those who reported drinking sugar-sweetened beverages two to three times per week.

13. About how many cans would you say you drink per week? (Open response)

Response	Percent
1.0	17.6
1.5	2.0
2.0	39.2
2.8	2.0
3.0	23.5
4.0	5.9
5.0	5.9
6.0	2.0
7.0	2.0

Question 14 was asked only of those who reported drinking sugar-sweetened beverages two to three times per month.

14. About how many cans would you say you drink per month? (Open response)

Response	Percent
1.0	9.8
2.0	29.4
2.5	3.9
3.0	31.4
4.0	13.7
5.0	2.0
6.0	2.0
8.0	2.0
12.0	2.0
48.0	2.0
Refused	2.0

15. Now I'm going to read you a list of shopping locations and I would like you to tell me at which of these you typically buy your sugar-sweetened beverages. Choose all that apply.

Option	Percent
Supermarket (Hannaford, Price Chopper, etc.)	77.5
Convenience store or gas station	33.0
Super stores such as WalMart	10.4
Vending machines	8.2
Discount store (Target, K-Mart, etc.)	3.3
Club store (Costco, Sam's Club, etc.)	0.7
Other	12.6
Don't know/Refused	0.5

16. At which of these locations do you buy the majority of your sugar-sweetened beverages?

Option	Percent
Supermarket (Hannaford, Price Chopper, etc.)	62.1
Convenience store or gas station	18.7
Super stores such as WalMart	6.6
Club store (Costco, Sam's Club, etc.)	1.6
Vending machines	1.1
Other	8.8
Don't Know/Refused	1.0

17. I'm now going to read you a list of sizes in which sugar-sweetened beverages are sold. Please tell me, yes or no, whether you purchase sugar-sweetened beverages in each size.

Option	Percent
A single 12-ounce bottle or can	57.7
A 12-pack of bottles or cans	30.8
A two-liter bottle	29.1
A single 20-ounce bottle or can	25.3
A six-pack of bottles or cans	19.8
A one-liter bottle	15.9
A 24-pack of bottles or cans	9.3
Other	10.4
Don't know	1.1

18. In which of these amounts do you purchase most of your sugar-sweetened beverages?

Option	Percent
A single 12-ounce bottle or can	26.4
A 12-pack of bottles or cans	19.8
A two-liter bottle	14.3
A single 20-ounce bottle or can	9.3
A six-pack of bottles or cans	7.7
A 24-pack of bottles or cans	7.1
A one-liter bottle	4.4
Other	9.3
Don't know	1.6

19. Now I'm going to ask you a couple questions about possible shopping scenarios. If you stopped at a gas station and wanted to buy a 16-ounce sugar-sweetened beverage that used to cost \$1.60 but because of a new tax now costs \$1.76 would you:

Option	Percent
Buy it anyway	52.2
Buy a non-taxed beverage, such as a diet drink, seltzer, 100 percent juice, coffee, milk, or water instead	24.7
Buy a non-beverage item instead	1.1

Not buy anything	18.7
Don't know/Refused	3.2

20. If you were doing your household shopping and wanted to buy a two-liter bottle of sugar-sweetened beverage that cost used to cost \$2.00 but because of a new tax now costs \$2.68 would you?

Option	Percent
Buy it anyway	37.4
Buy a non-taxed beverage, such as a diet drink, seltzer, 100 percent juice, coffee, milk, or water instead	22.5
Buy a non-beverage item instead	1.1
Not buy anything	33.0
Don't know/Refused	6.0

21. What county do you live in?

County	Percent
Addison	4.9
Bennington	4.3
Caledonia	3.5
Chittenden	26.6
Essex	1.4
Franklin	6.3
Grand Isle	1.6
Lamoille	2.4
Orange	4.3
Orleans	3.1
Rutland	7.3
Washington	7.7
Windham	6.1
Windsor	6.7
Don't know/Refused	13.8

Questions 22 through 24 were asked only of respondents living in counties adjacent to the New Hampshire border – Essex, Caledonia, Orange, Windham and Windsor counties – and of those who refused to state their county.

22. About how many miles away is the New Hampshire border?

Respondents' Average distance from NH Border (70.6 percent responding)
14.6 miles

23. Do you regularly drive to New Hampshire for your shopping?

Response	Percent
Yes	59.3
No	38.5
Don't Know/Refused	2.2

24. Would you drive to New Hampshire to avoid paying a one cent per ounce tax on sugar-sweetened beverages?

Response	Percent
Yes	17.8
No	79.3
Don't Know/Refused	2.9

25. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

Response	Percent
1	23.8
2	45.5
3	14.4
4	8.9
5	3.7
6	0.4
7	0.6
8	0.6
Other	0.2
Don't Know/Refused	2.0

Questions 26 and 27 were asked of those respondents reporting two or more people in the household.

26. How many related adults live in your household?

Response	Percent
1	11.9
2	57.3
3	10.6
4	3.4
5	0.5
Don't Know/Refused	16.2

27. How many related children under 18 years of age live in your household?

Response	Percent
0	50.1
1	10.3
2	8.0
3	2.7
4	0.5
5	0.3
6	0.5
Don't Know/Refused	27.6

Question 28 was asked only of respondents with children under 18 years of age in the household.

28. On average, would you say this child/these children drink more, less or about the same amount of sugar-sweetened beverages as yourself?

Response	Percent
More	36.0
Less	36.0
About the same	27.0
Don't know	1.1

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

29. BMI computed from height and weight responses:

Response	Percent
Normal weight or underweight	38.8
Overweight	34.6
Obese	12.2

Don't Know/Refused	14.4
--------------------	------

30. Household income:

Income level	Percent
Less than \$25,000	20.9
\$25,000 - \$49,999	22.0
\$50,000 - \$74,999	20.1
\$75,000 - \$99,999	11.4
\$100,000 and above	11.6
Don't know/Refused	14.0

31. Age:

Age	Percent
18-24	1.2
25-34	2.8
35-44	9.3
45-54	12.4
55-64	25.8
65+	45.7
Refused	3.0

32. Political orientation: (Question: In general, would you consider yourself more liberal, conservative or close to the middle?)

Response	Percent
Liberal	30.7
Conservative	22.6
In the middle	41.1
Other	1.4
Don't know/Refused	4.2

33. Gender:

Response	Percent
Female	63.2
Male	34.8
Refused	2.0