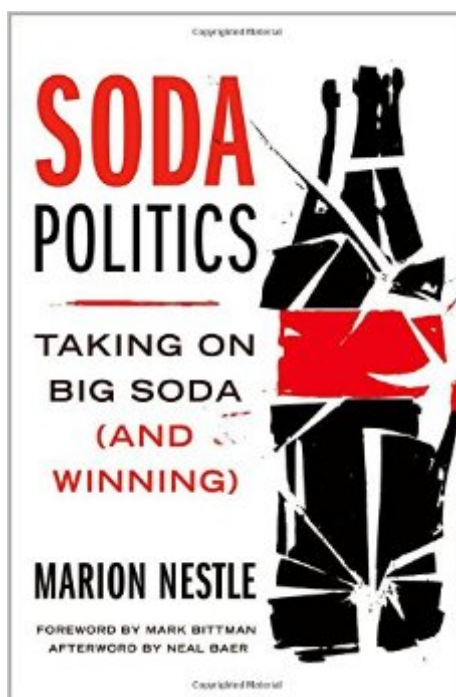


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# Soda Politics: Taking On Big Soda (and Winning)



## Synopsis

Sodas are astonishing products. Little more than flavored sugar-water, these drinks cost practically nothing to produce or buy, yet have turned their makers--principally Coca-Cola and PepsiCo--into a multibillion-dollar industry with global recognition, distribution, and political power. Billed as "refreshing," "tasty," "crisp," and "the real thing," sodas also happen to be so well established to contribute to poor dental hygiene, higher calorie intake, obesity, and type-2 diabetes that the first line of defense against any of these conditions is to simply stop drinking them. Habitually drinking large volumes of soda not only harms individual health, but also burdens societies with runaway healthcare costs. So how did products containing absurdly inexpensive ingredients become multibillion dollar industries and international brand icons, while also having a devastating impact on public health? In *Soda Politics*, the 2016 James Beard Award for Writing & Literature Winner, Dr. Marion Nestle answers this question by detailing all of the ways that the soft drink industry works overtime to make drinking soda as common and accepted as drinking water, for adults and children. Dr. Nestle, a renowned food and nutrition policy expert and public health advocate, shows how sodas are principally miracles of advertising; Coca-Cola and PepsiCo spend billions of dollars each year to promote their sale to children, minorities, and low-income populations, in developing as well as industrialized nations. And once they have stimulated that demand, they leave no stone unturned to protect profits. That includes lobbying to prevent any measures that would discourage soda sales, strategically donating money to health organizations and researchers who can make the science about sodas appear confusing, and engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to create goodwill and silence critics. *Soda Politics* follows the money trail wherever it leads, revealing how hard Big Soda works to sell as much of their products as possible to an increasingly obese world. But *Soda Politics* does more than just diagnose a problem--it encourages readers to help find solutions. From Berkeley to Mexico City and beyond, advocates are successfully countering the relentless marketing, promotion, and political protection of sugary drinks. And their actions are having an impact - for all of the hardball and softball tactics the soft drink industry employs to maintain the status quo, soda consumption has been flat or falling for years. Health advocacy campaigns are now the single greatest threat to soda companies' profits. *Soda Politics* provides readers with the tools they need to keep up pressure on Big Soda in order to build healthier and more sustainable food systems.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the woman who told *The New Yorker*: "The best thing Pepsi could do for worldwide obesity would be to go out of business." comes the ultimate, complete explanation of why sodas and the firms behind them are bad, who is doing what about it, and how you can help move it all along.

Marion Nestle has long been the rational, thorough and fair rapporteur of food crime. *Soda Politics* is a standalone compendium of her personal knowledge and direct and indirect experience in the battle to corral it. As with tobacco, soda makers know to start 'em young. Kids meals come with sodas by default. A child's portion is 12 ounces "their new normal. Big Soda has been paying schools a pittance for "exclusive pouring rights", plastering the campuses of even elementary schools with dispensing machines, posters and signs "not just for their drinks, but for their even more unhealthy snack foods. It's the kids' normal environment. For this, the school gets \$2 per child. \$4 for highschoolers. Nestle calls this an unprecedented attack on schools. Interestingly, kids who aren't allowed sodas at school don't then go home and guzzle them to make up the deficit. They can live without, and if we could simply substitute the default drink, everything would improve. Despite the "voluminous, consistent and compelling research", Big Soda maintains there is no direct link to all the new obesity and diabetes we see here, and in every nation they invade. In the USA, the amount of sugar they sell works out to 13 teaspoons for every man woman and child "per day. But then, some theaters sell a 44 ounce "medium". The soda companies recognize that health advocacy has become the single biggest threat to profits. And that the Big Tobacco playbook is not enough.

Will drinking a glass of cold, sparkling soda be soon the equivalent of smoking: you are a social pariah in the eyes of many, whilst providing a source of income for the producer and taxing government alike? You might not be able to draw a direct comparison since you are less likely to be hooked with an occasional glass of Coca-Cola, yet becoming a regular âœhookedâ • consumer can have its side effects. Thereâ™s a whole world of soda politics that you possibly had never imagined. This is an interesting book that looks, without recourse to hysteria or hyperbole, at the world of soda drinks, the role they play in our society and their real downside as these products contribute to poor dental hygiene, higher calorie intake, obesity and type-2 diabetes. Clearly a glass wonâ™t harm you, but several glasses a day or more? The author takes a forensic look at how the soda drinks industry works to get us hooked. Advertising is heavily used to make drinking soda seem normal, as normal as drinking a glass of milk or water. Would your football stadium hot dog be the same with a glass of water? What about a visit to the cinema, if you took milk with your over-priced popcorn? Carrot juice to accompany your hamburger at a fast-food joint? Even after any health issues that can follow there is a dark side. Why would the soda drinks industry be pumping large amounts of money to lobby against changes that could impact on their bottom line? They may shout loudly about their ethical policies and corporate social responsibility, whilst shovelling money at lobbyists to head off initiatives that might stop their products being marketed towards the most vulnerable (children) in places where they gather such as schools or cinemas. The author carefully comes out with her arguments.

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