Abstract

In an effort to combat childhood obesity, many schools have banned the sale of carbonated beverages on school grounds. I evaluate the effectiveness of these measures by investigating their impact on household carbonated beverage consumption. I match households in Nielsen Homescan Data to their school district’s carbonated beverage policies over the last 10 years. I use variation across school districts in whether the policy was implemented and the timing of the policy, as well as whether the household has children in the age group included in the policy. I find that when high schools ban the sale of carbonated beverages to students, households with a high school student experiencing the ban increase their consumption of non-diet carbonated beverages by roughly the equivalent of 3.5 cans per month. Increased consumption is greater in the quarter following the policy implementation and appears to persist even a year after the introduction of the ban. I present evidence that the average high school student consumes roughly 4.5 cans of non-diet soda per month in school, when carbonated beverages are available. Thus, the results suggest that the drop in student school consumption is substantially offset by increased household consumption.