On October 10, 2012, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (publisher of Nutrition Action Action), in effect, declared war on soda pop and other sugary drinks.

The initial shots didn’t come from guns or missiles, but from our first music video. “The Real Bears” (www.therealbears.org) features a catchy, cheerful song by Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter Jason Mraz. The story line isn’t so cheerful, though. It describes the fate of a cuddly polar-bear family that consumes too much soda and ends up with obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and erectile dysfunction.

The video quickly went viral, with close to two million views by pretime. People loved it. The soft-drink industry hated it. Coca-Cola sputtered and fumed. “This is irresponsible and the usual grandstanding from CSPI,” it charged. How juicy and hypocritical is that, coming from a company that spends some $2 billion a year to convince Americans to buy its sugary drinks? That includes not only the cost of ads, but also the enormous sums that the company doles out to fast-food restaurants to sell only full-sugar products. Coke, Pepsi, and smaller companies are marketing a wider range of low- and no-calorie drinks. The race is on to replace sugar with intensely sweet natural substances (like stevia and monk fruit). And a biotech company is working on compounds that sensitize the sweetness detectors on the tongue, which could slash the need for sugar (or high-fructose corn syrup) in drinks.

I predict that, with continued pressure from parents and professionals, in 10 years the beverage market will look very different from today, with the happy result—for soda-swigging bears and people—that rates of obesity, diabetes, heart attacks, and strokes will be lower.

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest

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For subscription information, contact us through NAH, 1015 15th St. NW, #300, Washington, DC 20005. TEL 202-265-4954. E-mail: circ@cspinet.org. Internet: www.cspinet.org. Application to mail at Periodical postage rates approved at post office of Washington, DC, and at additional offices.

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