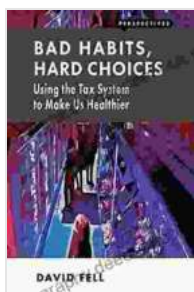


# Using the Tax System to Make Us Healthier: Perspectives

The tax system is a powerful tool that can be used to shape behavior. In recent years, there has been growing interest in using the tax system to promote healthier lifestyles. This article explores the potential health benefits of using the tax system to encourage healthy behaviors and discourage unhealthy ones.



## Bad Habits, Hard Choices: Using the Tax System to Make Us Healthier (Perspectives) by Soledad O'Brien

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2502 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 96 pages



## Taxes on unhealthy behaviors

One way to use the tax system to promote health is to tax unhealthy behaviors. This could include taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks. Taxes on unhealthy behaviors can discourage people from engaging in these behaviors, and they can also generate revenue that can be used to fund health promotion programs.

There is evidence that taxes on unhealthy behaviors can be effective in reducing consumption. For example, a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that a 10% increase in the price of cigarettes leads to a 4% decrease in smoking rates.

Taxes on unhealthy behaviors can also generate significant revenue. For example, the United States government collected over \$40 billion in tobacco taxes in 2018. This revenue can be used to fund health promotion programs, such as smoking cessation programs and nutrition education programs.

### **Subsidies for healthy behaviors**

Another way to use the tax system to promote health is to subsidize healthy behaviors. This could include subsidies for fruits and vegetables, physical activity, and preventive care.

Subsidies for healthy behaviors can encourage people to adopt these behaviors, and they can also make these behaviors more affordable.

There is evidence that subsidies for healthy behaviors can be effective in promoting health. For example, a study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that a subsidy of \$1 per serving of fruits and vegetables increased fruit and vegetable consumption by 25%.

Subsidies for healthy behaviors can also make these behaviors more affordable. For example, a subsidy for physical activity could help people to pay for gym memberships or fitness classes.

### **Tax breaks for health insurance**

The tax system can also be used to provide tax breaks for health insurance. This can help to make health insurance more affordable, and it can also encourage people to get health insurance.

There is evidence that tax breaks for health insurance can be effective in increasing health insurance coverage. For example, a study by the Congressional Budget Office found that a tax credit for health insurance increased health insurance coverage by 4 percentage points.

Tax breaks for health insurance can also help to make health insurance more affordable. For example, a tax break for health insurance could help people to pay for their health insurance premiums.

The tax system is a powerful tool that can be used to shape behavior. In recent years, there has been growing interest in using the tax system to promote healthier lifestyles. This article has explored the potential health benefits of using the tax system to encourage healthy behaviors and discourage unhealthy ones.

There is evidence that taxes on unhealthy behaviors, subsidies for healthy behaviors, and tax breaks for health insurance can all be effective in promoting health. These tax policies can help to reduce consumption of unhealthy products, encourage adoption of healthy behaviors, and make health insurance more affordable.

Using the tax system to promote health is a promising approach that has the potential to improve the health of the population.

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