

Subject: Diet or Regular Soft Drinks - Does it Matter?

Most people already know that soft drinks are not health food.

After all the average 8 ounce can of soda contains 12-15 teaspoons of sugar or the equivalent amount of high-fructose corn syrup - and who drinks just an 8 ounce can of soda these days! That's bound to pack on the pounds and lead to blood sugar fluctuations.

That's why more and more Americans choose diet soft drinks instead. But are diet soft drinks a better choice? A recent study has answered that question with a resounding NO!

This study followed 6039 participants in the Framingham Heart study for four years (Dhingra et al, Circulation, 116: 480-488, 2007). All of the participants were free of metabolic syndrome, a medical condition associated with obesity that greatly increases the risk of diabetes and heart disease, at the beginning of the study.

As they had expected the scientists found that those subjects who consumed one or more sugar-containing soft drinks a day were 48% more likely to develop obesity and metabolic syndrome than subjects who consumed no soft drinks.

But the scientists were astounded to find that subjects who consumed one or more diet soft drinks a day were just as likely to develop obesity and metabolic syndrome as subjects who consumed regular soft drinks!

This could not be explained by differences in their diet or exercise levels. Simple put the diets of the regular and diet soft drink consumers were equally bad and they both exercised to about the same extent - which wasn't very much.

In fact, the news was all bad. Subjects who consumed one or more either diet or regular soft drinks a day had a:

- 31 percent greater risk of developing new-onset obesity;
- 30 percent increased risk of developing increased waist circumference;
- 25 percent increased risk of developing high blood triglycerides or high fasting blood glucose;
- 32 percent higher risk of having low HDL levels.

The authors were at a loss to explain their results.

- One popular theory is that the fructose corn syrup in regular soft drinks causes weight gain, which can lead to metabolic syndrome. However, if that were the case, one would have expected to see an association of soft drink consumption and metabolic syndrome with regular soft drinks, but not with diet soft drinks.
- Another popular theory is that consuming more liquids is associated with a lesser degree of dietary compensation. Usually if you eat a lot of calories at one meal, you're inclined to eat a smaller amount of calories at the next meal. This theory says that if you consume your calories as liquids rather than solids at a meal, you are less likely to compensate and eat fewer calories at the next meal.

However, this effect would only be true for liquids that actually contained calories, and doesn't explain why the effect was identical for both diet and regular soft drinks.

- Another theory is that the high sweetness of both diet and regular soft drinks causes the brain to release

chemicals that cause us to crave other sweet foods - so we eat more. There is less evidence for this theory at present, but it is the only one that is fully consistent with the results of this study.

Even though the mechanism of the effect is unclear, the results are crystal clear. The authors of the study concluded "In middle-aged adults, soft-drink consumption [both diet and regular] is associated with a higher prevalence and incidence of multiple metabolic risk factors [for diabetes and heart disease]".

To your health,
Steve Chaney

Dr. Stephen Chaney
Shaklee Master Coordinator
<http://www.chaneyhealth.com>

>