

Why Is Soda Bad For You

Unless you've been living under a rock for the last few decades, you've probably heard that pop is bad for you. There's a pretty good chance you've heard at least one person say pop is largely responsible for the obesity epidemic.

The trouble is that soda is delicious. Most people in the western half of the world developed a love of soda as children. Everybody wants to be healthier, but many people don't want to give up their soda.

Is soda truly responsible for the obesity epidemic? Maybe not--there are certainly other factors to consider--but it certainly does cause a lot of health problems, even if you're drinking diet soda.

Ready to be disturbed? Let's take a look at what commercial soda is doing to your body:

Regular Soda and Your Weight

Every can of Coke has 140 calories, and while that may not sound like a lot, it adds up pretty quickly. There's also been a significant amount of research done in the last decade that proves calories from soft drinks don't have the same value as calories from actual food(<http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2012/06/27/when-dieting-not-all-calories-are-created-equal/>).

What exactly does that mean? If two average people have the same number of calories in their diet except that one of them drinks a can of Coke every year, the Coke drinker will gain an extra 14.5 pounds thanks to their pop habit.

This may not happen to every Coke drinker because there are several factors involved including diet, exercise and metabolism, but it's highly probable. If you've been putting on weight consistently for the last few years, cutting back on commercial soda might help you lose some of it--or at least prevent you from putting on more.

Regular Soda and Your Heart

Your average can of commercial soda has 41 grams of sugar, 30 milligrams of sodium and 38 milligrams of caffeine. The sugar certainly will contribute to weight gain, but the combination of sodium and caffeine is what can really damage your heart.

Caffeine increases your heart rate and blood pressure. Sodium increases food retention. Together, they increase your risk of atherosclerosis, which is the scientific term for hardened arteries. You might not be an expert on heart health, but odds are you've heard that hardened arteries are bad news.

Excessive soda drinking also increases your risk of developing metabolic syndrome, which is characterized by things like low HDL (or “good”) cholesterol and high blood pressure and can lead to diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

What About Diet Soda?

Diet soda might soothe your fears with a “zero calories” label, but that doesn’t make it healthy. All the time new studies are proving that heavy intake of diet soda is associated with all kinds of negative health effects. Diet soda has even been linked to depression and preterm delivery(<http://authoritynutrition.com/why-is-diet-soda-bad-for-you/>).

Worse yet, nobody has actually proven that diet soda doesn’t actually produce the same effects as regular soda. Metabolic syndrome is just as likely to occur in someone who regularly drinks a lot of diet soda as it is in somebody who regularly drinks a lot of commercial soda.

To top it all off, a recent study by Purdue University(<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2013/07/10/dark-side-diet-drinks/>) shows that artificial sweeteners used in diet soda might even negatively affect the body. Your body automatically has a natural reaction to sugar, and consuming too many artificial sweeteners can change that reaction when you actually eat real sugar.

Is there a way to enjoy healthy soda?

Enjoying a cold glass of soda with less guilt means you need to redefine what you think of as “soda”, but the good news is that it’s pretty easy. And unlike making the switch to organic food, this is a lifestyle change that will actually save you money.

The healthiest move might be to go without altogether, but if you love soda too much to give it up entirely, your best option is to purchase a SodaStream machine and start making your own soda at home.

All SodaStream drink mixes are designed to create a drink that, while not as good for you as straight up water, won’t damage your health as much as standard Coca Cola. Every SodaStream drink will have less sodium and sugar than Coke or another commercial soda, and there are even SodaStream syrups made with all natural ingredients to help you stay healthy.

But that’s not the only way a SodaStream allows you to enjoy soda guilt free. You can try adding 100% fruit juice to some sparkling water for a healthy and refreshing drink, or create your own syrup using all natural ingredients. Once you start experimenting with creating your own specialized SodaStream drinks, you also open yourself up to limitless flavour options.

Of course, you can also use the SodaStream to make your own sparkling water. Who knows, it might be just the thing you need to start drinking a healthy amount of water every day.

Conclusion

The occasional can of Coke or Pepsi isn't going to do much, but a daily soda habit can be extremely damaging to your health. Whether you're addicted to standard pop or you've got an intense diet soda habit, if you don't make some kind of change you'll probably gain weight and might even develop heart problems.

Choose to drink healthier soda by purchasing a SodaStream and controlling exactly what goes into your soda. You'll be able to do more than enjoy healthy soda: you'll get to have fun making your own refreshing drinks. Oh, and you'll never have to lug those heavy plastic bottles home from the grocery store again.