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21 Reasons Why Soda Is Killing You

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At a party with friends, it might seem totally innocent to grab a cup of soda for a nice mixed drink. But what if you buy a soda—or three, or four—every single day? “One soda every once in a while won’t kill you, but a significant daily intake will lead to health issues,” says CEO of Your Nutrition Delivery Erik Frank. “Like cigarettes, soda should come with a warning from the surgeon general. Why else would the City of New York try to limit its availability?”



But really, what’s so bad about soda? Coca-Cola ads make it seem as though the bubbly, fizzy drink is what’s bonding us together. Unfortunately, that’s not the truth. Soda isn’t bonding us together...it’s killing us. Soda is terrible for you, and we are drinking it more than ever. “Compared to 30 years ago, our consumption has tripled,” says registered dietician and author Liz Pearson. That’s because soda is readily available anywhere...and people don’t realize just how terrible it is for you. Here are 21 reasons why you need to ditch soda for good.

Why You Need To Stop Drinking Soda ASAP

1. It’s terrible for your teeth

When thinking about the health consequences of soda, “most people never consider the dental health aspect,” says fitness expert Rob Miller. “The sugar content and acidity of soda can destroy your teeth.”

How does that work? “Soda contains phosphoric acid and is well known to interfere with the body’s ability to absorb calcium,” says Rene Ficek, registered dietician and lead nutrition expert at Seattle Sutton’s Healthy Eating. That can lead to—you guessed it—cavities and enamel rot.

If you absolutely must drink soda, there is a way to drink it that is a bit better for your teeth. “Slurping your drink quickly is preferable to sipping it slowly,” says Harvard/Columbia trained periodontist Dr. David Genet. “Sipping is the equivalent of bathing your teeth in sugar, which fuels bacteria.”

2. It will make you fat...

You may have guessed that soda can lead to an extra pound or two, but you may not know just how susceptible you are to gaining weight if you are a regular soda drinker. “The over consumption of

soda is partially to blame for the country's obesity epidemic, and surely has contributed to 50% of the population being at least 20 pounds overweight," says Frank.

In fact, according to Ficek, "The relationship between soft drink consumption and body weight is so strong that researchers calculate that for each additional soda consumed, the risk of obesity increases 1.6 times."

Need more proof? According to Pearson, "no other food or drink has a stronger link to obesity." Yeesh.

3. ...because it's packed with calories...

You're supposed to consume calories from food for fuel, but many people don't realize that calories come in the form of liquid as well—which can spell doom for any diet. "Many people either forget or don't realize how many extra calories they consume in what they drink," says Ficek. "Drinking a single can a day of sugary drinks translates to over one pound of weight gain every month."

Fitness icon Denise Austin suggests avoiding any sugary beverages at all to really cut down on excess calorie consumption. "Nature's beverage – water – contains no calories and will help you stay hydrated and feeling great," says Austin. "In order to make your backside your best side, switch out that soda for a refreshing glass of water."

4. ...and makes you crave fatty foods.

Not only is soda totally packed with calories, but it can actually make you crave even more calories, according to chief clinical dietician at Cassena Care Felice Kosakavich. "[Drinking soda] can lead to a false sense of hunger causing cravings for more sweets," says Kosakavich.

The reason for this is because your body thinks it needs more energy after blood sugar spikes. It makes you "feel tired, sluggish and usually hungry," according to registered dietician and nutritionist Kimberly Tessmer. "In fact studies have found that people tend to eat more on days that they drink more soda."

If you find yourself reaching for a candy bar, it could be that soda that's to blame!

5. Specifically, soda can cause belly fat—one of the most dangerous types.

Are you finding it harder to button your jeans? Listen up: **"The high sugar content of soda has been conclusively linked to an increase in abdominal fat-which is dangerous, as this is where many vital organs are," says certified nutritionist and fitness trainer Franci Cohen.**

Protect your organs and put down the soda!

6. Soda has way too much sugar.

Clearly, soda has sugar. But that's not the problem.

"The issue with soda is not that it has sugar," says renowned health and nutrition expert Jacob Teitelbaum. "Rather, it is with how much sugar—an astounding three quarters of a teaspoon per ounce."

As Teitelbaum points out, this means that a 64 ounce soda has approximately 48 spoonfuls of sugar...ugh.

7. Soda can lead to exhaustion and fatigue...

Sure, 48 spoonfuls of sugar is a lot, but why is that so bad? Carolyn Dean, Medical Advisory Board Member of the Nutritional Magnesium Association gives us a new perspective.

“At any one time, there is usually only two teaspoons of sugar in the whole body,” says Dean. “That makes a ten teaspoons shot of sugar a shock to the system and the body has to push that sugar out of the blood as soon as possible.”

That’s where the energy surge and hyperactivity comes into play, says Dean. “But then the blood sugar may go too low, resulting in symptoms of hypoglycemia—fatigue, headache, sleepiness, or worse.”

8. ...a sign of diabetes.

Fatigue is rough...but that’s not the worst of it. “Over time, this push and pull on the pancreas to produce more insulin and the cells to accept more sugar results in depleted insulin and insulin resistance of the cells—diabetes,” says Dean.

9. The artificial sweeteners in diet soda are just as bad.

You may think that switching to diet soda to avoid that excess sugar will help, but not so fast.

“Artificial sweeteners still induce the release of insulin causing the same metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance and ultimately, diabetes, that regular soda does,” says Hollywood cardiologist Dr. Adam Splaver.

In fact, even just a little diet soda can prove deadly. “Even just one diet soda a day is linked to a higher risk of metabolic syndrome with symptoms including belly fat and high cholesterol,” said Barbara Wade, personal trainer, fitness model, and founder of Fit And Ageless Over 50. “The artificial sweeteners in diet soda can disrupt the body’s natural ability to regulate calorie intake based on the sweetness of foods.”

Why? Because sugar isn’t the only demon in this equation. “Even if it is labeled ‘sugar-free,’ it is not chemical free, and that is just as harmful,” says Angela Leigh, certified yoga/fitness instructor and wellness coach. “Water is the best source with which to hydrate.”

10. The more you drink soda, the less you hydrate your body.

This may seem like a given, but it’s important: any time you’re drinking soda, you’re not drinking water. “Sodas do nothing but fill your body with empty calories and sugar,” says trainer and Youtube celebrity Mike Chang. “If you are drinking sodas, you are depriving your body of good clean water and increasing the demand on the pancreas, as it produces the insulin-producing cells with a greater challenge.”

Bored of water? “My favorite substitute [for soda] is some flavored sparkling water (try lemon or lime) with a splash of cranberry and a twist of citrus,” says fitness expert Jennifer Galardi.

11. You can actually become addicted to soda.

That craving for cola may not just be in your head—your body could actually be addicted.

“I have personally seen a client, who formerly consumed three to four colas a day, quit and continue to lose 15 pounds in a month without changing anything else in his diet,” said Frank. “He also suffered from debilitating headaches and nausea for three days after quitting.”

How does this addiction work? Yet again, it has to do with sugar. According to Jenny Evans nutrition and exercise physiology expert and author of *The Resiliency rEvolution: Your Stress Solution For Life*, “When blood glucose levels spike, they’re typically followed by a crash of low blood sugar. When blood sugar levels are low, we crave fast energy that can be found in another can of soda.”

This may seem relatively harmless, but it’s really a never-ending vortex of unhealthy behavior.

“These spikes and crashes not only affect blood glucose levels, but energy levels as well,” said Evans.

“We get stuck on the energy roller coaster and don’t have the consistent levels of energy we need to meet the demands of our work and home lives, all the while making us sick and overweight.”

12. There is literally no nutritional benefit whatsoever.

So you like drinking soda because it tastes good. Hold on tightly to that excuse, because there is literally not a single other one out there.

“There is no benefit from drinking soda and it should be avoided altogether,” said Ficek. “As a dietitian, I generally do not like to label foods as ‘bad’ or ‘good,’ but soda is one instance I make that exception. There are many foods that provide some sort of nutrition to the body, but soda does not fall into that category and should be avoided completely.”

When asked why people shouldn’t drink soda, Galardi put it very succinctly: “I think the better question is, why should anyone drink soda? There is nothing more unnatural or detrimental to good health than soda. Liquid calories of sugar—and not even real sugar, it’s high fructose corn syrup—offer nothing in the way of nutritional value.”

13. In fact, soda can actually lead to malnutrition.

Not only does soda have no nutritional benefit itself, but it can lead to malnutrition itself through under-consuming nutrient-rich foods, according to Kosakavich.

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“Children are drinking soda instead of milk, which is limiting adequate amounts of calcium for adequate bone growth,” warns Kosakavich.

Soda is also packed with phosphoric acid, “which can interfere with the body’s ability to absorb calcium and other essential nutrients,” according to Tessmer. Ick...does that soda still taste good to you now?

14. Soda may also cause osteoporosis...

Soda can steal those important nutrients from your bones, leading to osteoporosis. “Beyond the sugars, sodas also contain phosphoric acid, which is known to promote osteoporosis or bone loss by leaching calcium from bones, as well as benzoate or benzoic acid,” says Splaver.

15. ...and studies have shown that soda can cause cancer.

According to Splaver, when left in hot temperatures, that benzoic acid can transform into a scarier chemical: benzene.

“Ever notice your soda tasting chemically ‘off’ when it’s been stored improperly? That’s benzene you’re tasting, a known carcinogen or cancer causing agent,” said Splaver.

In fact, the coloring used to make Coke and Pepsi “blackish” have been found to cause cancer in animals, according to Cohen. “Scientists caution about the cancer risk for humans,” Cohen warns.

16. Soda can create kidney stones.

Anyone who’s had to pass a kidney stone knows that it’s one of the most painful experiences ever, so perhaps this will serve as good motivation to quit: soda can cause kidney stones, says Pearson.

According to Chang, “the kidneys are put under massive stress, causing mineral imbalances, which can produce kidney stones.” Ouch.

17. It can destroy your liver.

In fact, “soda’s effects on the liver have also been known to cause the same kind of kidney problems that plague alcoholics,” according to Chang. Makes that Pepsi bottle look like a totally different kind of bottle!

Pearson adds to this, claiming that soda can make fat accumulate in the liver, “causing inflammation and scarring,” says Pearson. This can progress to liver failure.

18. Soda can make you older, faster!

Not only does soda make you fat, but it can affect your beauty in a totally different way: accelerated aging, “due to the high levels of phosphoric acid in sodas,” according to Cohen.

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19. Soda can make you infertile.

Future parents, listen up: a can of soda can actually affect your ability to have children. “Aluminum soda cans are lined with an epoxy resin called BPA, which may interfere with your hormones, effecting infertility,” says David Zulberg, author of *The 5 Skinny Habits: How Ancient Wisdom Can Help You Lose Weight And Change Your Life Forever*.

20. Soda can make you unhappy...literally.

All of these nasty effects can have an effect on your psyche. Soda can promote anxiety and depression. “Not exactly what I would call ‘liquid happiness,’” says Teitelbaum.

21. All of this is because soda is packed with dangerous substances with complicated names.

Just one example is an ingredient called brominated vegetable oil (or BVO). “[BVO is] found in lighter colored sodas like Mountain Dew and other citrus-based soft drinks and sports drinks,” said Cohen. “It’s an industrial chemical used as a flame retardant in plastics. The chemical has been known to cause memory loss and nerve disorders when consumed in large amounts. This chemical accumulates in body fat, and over time, leads to behavioral problems, infertility, and lesions on heart muscles.”

Yeesh. There is nothing natural about soda whatsoever! “Any substance that can physically addict the body, cause teeth to rot, and can clean a corroded car battery can’t possibly be a smart choice for a midafternoon pick me up,” says Frank.

Takeaway

Soda may be available wherever you turn, but do your body a favor and stay away from it. To pour such nasty stuff into your system is to poison your body. There is no nutritional benefits from soda whatsoever, and experts agree that soda is the worst thing you can do to yourself. Remember: you only get one life.