

Cutting Soda and Other Sugary Drinks From Your Diet

Imagine it's a hot summer day and you have been working or playing hard outside for several hours. Or, you are getting comfy in the best seat in the movie theater - you have a big warm bag of freshly popped, perfectly salted popcorn and the movie is about to start. These are the perfect times to grab an ice cold soda and feel that sugary goodness fizz and bubble down your throat. I think most people can agree that, from time to time, a soda can really hit the spot. As good as this sounds, however, Americans are dying by the thousands from having too much sugar and research shows that an excessive amount of soda is to blame. Type 2 diabetes, caused by exorbitant sugar intake, is a growing epidemic in our country, almost tripling over the last 30 years. Also, sugary drinks are a major cause of the obesity epidemic in the United States. If we care about our health we should all find other alternatives to sugary drinks and even commit to eliminating them from our diets.

Type 2 diabetes may sound like a strange medical condition that doesn't affect you, but if you drink soda regularly, you are wrong. The recommended daily maximum amount of sugar intake for adults is 25 to 37 grams, and for a school aged child it is 25 grams. A typical 20 oz bottle of soda contains about 39 grams of sugar which, if you do the math, is a lot more than anyone is supposed to have. Doctors aren't being mean, they actually care about us. Drinking too much soda is one of the major factors in the development of pre-diabetes, the condition people have before they are fully diabetic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 40 percent of Americans will develop diabetes in their lifetime. Black women and Latino men get diabetes at an even higher rate of 50 percent! Diabetes can lead to lots of other bad medical conditions like blindness, kidney failure, amputation, liver disease, heart attacks, cancer, and others. These conditions can make your life a lot harder and shorter.

Another scary medical condition related to drinking sugary drinks is *obesity*, or what some people call being overweight. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, children and adults are drinking more sugary drinks than ever before. The size of the average soda drink has risen from a 12 oz can to a 20 oz bottle. Over the past 25 years, the amount of calories that 6 to 11 year olds consume through sugary drinks has almost doubled! All of this added sugar drinking has resulted in higher rates of obesity, which can cause other medical problems. Obesity can lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, gout and other conditions that make it harder for you to live a fun and active life.

In conclusion, we need to decrease the amount of sugary drinks that we consume. While they may taste good for a little while, you are doing a lot of damage to your body. You are increasing your chances of getting type 2 diabetes, obesity and all of the illnesses that are related to them. If you can't totally eliminate these beverages from your diet, you should cut back as much as you can. If you want to live a long and healthy life, where you can be active and feel good into your older years, do yourself a favor and eliminate or cut back on soda and other sugary drinks.