

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Wayne Terai

Soda Consumption Linked With Health Problems

In 2007 the worldwide annual consumption of soft drinks reached 552 billion liters, the equivalent of just under 83 liters per person per year, and this is projected to increase to 95 liters per person per year by 2012. The figure has already reached an average of 212 liters per person per year in the United States, with similar alarming rates in Canada and other countries.

As a holistic health-care provider, Dr. Terai is concerned about this rising trend, and its health effects — and therefore encourages patients to avoid soft drinks. Need some motivation? Read on to learn more about scientific research showing that forgoing soda may ward off pain and disease.



The research review looked at patients whose consumption ranged from two to nine liters of cola a day. Findings showed that muscle symptoms may range from mild weakness to profound paralysis. Fatigue, appetite loss and vomiting were also seen (*Int J Clin Pract* 2009;63:900-2).

Headache Hassles

Soda may trigger a widespread — yet little known — condition called “drug-rebound headache.” Doctors of chiropractic, like Dr. Terai care for many patients with this condition. In this case, the “drug” is caffeine, sugar or artificial chemicals. Researchers speculate that many headache sufferers diagnosed with “tension headaches” are actually plagued by the symptoms of drug rebound.

“We are consuming more soft drinks than ever before and a number of health issues have already been identified including tooth problems, bone demineralization and the development of metabolic syndrome and diabetes,” says study author, Dr. Moses Elisaf.

“Evidence is increasing to suggest that excessive cola consumption can also lead to hypokalaemia, in which the blood potassium levels fall, causing an adverse effect on vital muscle functions.”

Muscle Maladies

New research reveals that excessive soda consumption can lead to muscle problems, according to the *International Journal of Clinical Practice*. (*Int J Clin Pract* 2009;63:900-2).



Find Out More About Chiropractic Wellness Research From Dr. Wayne Terai

If you are interested in wellness research, you have come to the right place! Dr. Terai is committed to providing patients with the latest cutting-edge research in chiropractic and related fields, such as nutrition, stress-reduction, environmental influences on health, exercise and how one's attitude affects well-being.

To this end, each week we present a new, hot-off-the-presses *Optimal Health University*® topic. This office is focused on teaching our patients and community about this vital health information, which will jump-start them on the road to wellness. To find out more about this revolutionary approach to patient education, or to suggest future *Optimal Health University*® topics, please call our office today!

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“Although most patients recover when they stop drinking cola and take potassium supplements, cola-induced chronic hypokalaemia can make them more susceptible to potentially fatal complications, such as an irregular heartbeat,” says Dr. Elisaf.

Bone Bombarder

Experts caution that the abundance of phosphorus in soft drinks, such as cola, alters the body’s delicate mineral balance.

This disproportion inhibits calcium metabolism, in turn weakening bones and predisposing them to osteoporosis. For example, girls who drink carbonated beverages have a heightened risk of bone fracture, according to a report published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*.

The study tracked 460 9th- and 10th-grade girls. Subjects completed questionnaires detailing physical activity, behavioral habits, carbonated beverage consumption and history of bone fracture.

Findings revealed that girls who drank carbonated beverages had 3.14 times the risk of fracture, compared with their peers who steered clear of soda pop. These results were especially pronounced among physically fit girls who drank cola. Specifically, drinking cola boosted the risk of fracture by nearly five-fold in active girls (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2000;154:614).

Soft drinks also wreak havoc on older bones. One report determined that postmenopausal women who drank cola daily were at a higher risk of low blood calcium levels, compared with their peers who did not drink cola (*J Clin Epidemiol* 1999;52:1007).

Diabetes Dilemma

Many soft drinks contain a colossal amount of sugar. The quick blood-sugar jolt produced by guzzling soda stimulates a dramatic insulin response. Relentless insulin fluctuations may provoke diabetes and alter hormone levels, possibly triggering some types of cancer. One study on the subject concluded that soft drink-provoked

insulin fluctuations during childhood are “one of the nutritional pathways which might affect susceptibility for breast cancer in youngsters” (*Eur J Cancer Prev* 1999;8:289-95).

Obesity Overload

Obesity is a major risk factor for an array of diseases, including certain forms of cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. And, research reveals that carbohydrate-laden soda incites obesity, especially in youngsters.

Tooth Troubles

Sugar-laden soda pop fosters tooth decay and gum disease in both youngsters and adults. And, late-breaking evidence shows that gum disorders boost a person’s risk of cardiovascular disease, because the bacteria in the mouth may spread to the heart.

Diet Soda Downfalls

The soda aisle is jam-packed with diet varieties. But, these seemingly “healthy” drinks are brimming with potentially dangerous chemicals. For instance, saccharine is a possible carcinogen. What about aspartame (NutraSweet®)? Chiropractors have warned against aspartame since it first hit the market because research suggests that the chemical may deteriorate the brain.

One scientific study was conducted by an unlikely source — 16-year-old “whiz kid” Susie Morris of Price, Utah. Morris compared rats that drank fresh water to rats that drank sugar water and rats that drank aspartame-flavored water. Rats that drank sugar water learned to navigate a maze 30 percent faster than controls, while rats that drank aspartame-flavored water were unable to decipher the maze. Instead, they engaged in what Morris called a “repetition of meaningless behavior.”

And here’s the real kicker: research indicates that drinking low-cal soda doesn’t promote weight loss! It seems that dieters who choose artificially sweetened pop tend to “make up” the saved calories elsewhere.

Attractive Alternatives

So you’re convinced that it’s time to dump the soda. But, the idea of drinking eight glasses of plain aqua every day is as thrilling as the prospect of having a tooth pulled. Take heart, there are a plethora of delicious alternative libations. For example, concoct your own caffeine-free iced punch by chilling a mixture of your favorite herbal teas. Sparkling water may also provide a creative diversion from still water, especially when accented with a sprig of mint or squeeze of lime. Diluting organic 100 percent fruit juice with an equal part water is another flavorful option.



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