

This Is What Happens To Your Body When You Stop Drinking Soda

Source: MSN Health & Fitness

Soda is an addiction — similar to tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, it feels good when you consume it, but it can wreak havoc on your body long-term. As more and more research investigates the ill effects of soda on the human body (and the environment), it may be time for you to give it up, or at least reduce the amount you intake on a daily or weekly basis.

The evidence speaks for itself: Your health will drastically improve once you begin replacing your daily Coke or Mountain Dew with water. Pretty much every organ will benefit from quitting soda, as explained below.

First and foremost, you'll be taking better care of your heart the moment you put down the soda. A 2012 Harvard University study found that sugary drinks increased a person's risk of chronic heart disease (CHD). Participants who drank the most soda were 20 percent more likely to have a heart attack, the researchers discovered. Another study, published in 2011, found that sugary beverages raises a person's blood pressure, and it increases the more you drink. Even cutting back by one soda per day can decrease your blood pressure and improve your heart health.

Many people reach for a Diet Coke or a soft drink in the drowsy after-lunch hours at work, hoping to get a caffeine and sugar boost. It may help you focus temporarily, but in the long-term drinking a lot of soda can have a negative effect on your brain function and thinking processes. One study found that long-term consumption of sugar could lead to impaired learning, memory, and behavioral plasticity.

“We have investigated a potential mechanism by which a diet, similar in composition to the typical diet of most industrialized western societies rich in saturated fat and refined sugar (HFS), can influence brain structure and function via regulation of neurotrophins,” the authors of the study write. They found that animals placed on this high-sugar diet had reduced amounts of a chemical called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which in turn impacted their ability to learn and remember things.

Various other studies have also found a link between drinking a lot of soda and an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia; the link showed an increased amount of plaque deposits in mice that were given sugary sodas — signals of Alzheimer's or other disorders.

Soda destroys your teeth, so stepping away from this vice will lead you toward better oral health and a whiter smile. In some extreme cases, drinking a lot of soda can leave your mouth as corroded as that of a meth abuser, according to a 2013 study. In the study, researchers found that a woman who drank 2 liters of diet soda every day for three to five years had the same level of

severe tooth erosion as that of a methamphetamine addict, as well as a crack cocaine addict. The citric acid in soda erodes tooth enamel, making it softer and more vulnerable to cavities and yellowing. Stepping away from soda and replacing it with water will protect and clean your teeth.

Soda is a diuretic, essentially meaning that it will make you need to pee urgently and frequently. It has also been known to irritate your bladder and exacerbate bladder infections or urinary tract infections. Switching it out with drinking clear fluids, like water, unsweetened juices, or seltzer water, could instead help keep your body and bladder clean.

Abstaining from soda will also improve your bone health and decrease your risk of osteoporosis. In addition, the less soda you drink, the more you may turn to milk or other calcium-fortified drinks that will benefit your bones way more than soda ever would.

Your kidney is also going to be in better shape once you kick the dirty sugar habit. Studies have shown that drinking a lot of soda can increase your risk of kidney disease and ultimately kidney failure. Diet sodas aren't exempt from this damage, either: researchers from the Nurses' Health Study found that women who drank a lot of diet soda every day had decreased liver function compared to women who didn't drink soda. So stay away from it and your kidneys will thank you.

In some cases, soda cans may contain bisphenol-A or BPA, which has been linked to an increased risk of cancer as well as impairment of endocrine function. Some studies have also shown that BPA is linked to premature puberty or infertility, essentially messing up a person's reproductive organs.

According to the Breast Cancer Fund, BPA is one of the most common chemicals out there — exposed to us via food and drink containers to dental fillings. It's a synthetic estrogen that impairs the hormonal system, increasing a person's risk for breast cancer, prostate cancer, metabolic disorders, and even type 2 diabetes. Choose to lower your exposure to this chemical by not touching those soda cans and your risks will be lower.

One of the easiest ways to lose weight is to cut soda from your diet. If you're a rabid drinker (drinking it several times a day without fail, day and night), cutting down to one can a day could be a good start, at least until you're eventually comfortable with cutting it out to once a week or leaving it behind completely.

According to Malia Frey, a weight loss expert writing on About Health, dropping a daily large Coca-Cola from McDonald's completely (if you drink about one per day) would result in reducing your annual calorie intake by over 200,000 calories — or about 60 pounds — in one year. Replace that soda with water and overcome obesity.

As the obesity epidemic continues to surge in the U.S., Americans will continue to stubbornly order McDonald's and their giant Coca-Colas, then proceed to sit on their couch for hours and watch TV — or sit in their office for hours. All of these factors lead to obesity, an increased risk of diabetes, and a higher chance of developing other chronic disorders like cancer or heart

disease. Long-term consumption of large, sugary, fatty sodas will ultimately contribute to, and directly cause, diabetes. Lose the soda and lose the pounds.

Here's one easy way to live longer: Drop the soda. A recent study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that people who drank a lot of soda had shorter telomeres in immune cells, meaning their risk of dying sooner was higher. Telomeres are protective DNA units that are situated at the ends of chromosomes, and the shorter they get, the more a person ages and is at risk for disease and death. So cutting out that good-for-nothing sugary drink from your life will seemingly only offer you good things, by lengthening your telomeres as well as your life span, and improve your overall health.