

## **Drinking Diet Soda Increases Depression Risk**

*Source: Food Product Design*

Adults who drink sweetened beverages—diet drinks in particular—have an increased risk of depression, while adults who drink about four cups of coffee a day are 10% less likely to develop depression, according to new research that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 65th Annual Meeting in March. The findings suggest eliminating or limiting sweetened diet drinks or replacing them with unsweetened coffee may naturally help lower depression risk.

Researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of certain beverages on depression risk. The study involved 263,925 people between ages 50 and 71 years at enrollment. From 1995 to 1996, consumption of drinks such as soda, tea, fruit punch and coffee was evaluated. At a 10-year follow-up, participants were asked whether they had been diagnosed with depression since the year 2000. A total of 11,311 depression diagnoses were made.

They found people who drank more than four cans or cups per day of soda were 30% more likely to develop depression than those who drank no soda. Those who drank four cans of fruit punch per day were about 38% more likely to develop depression than those who did not drink sweetened drinks. People who drank four cups of coffee per day were about 10% less likely to develop depression than those who drank no coffee. The risk appeared to be greater for people who drank diet than regular soda, diet than regular fruit punches and for diet than regular iced tea.

"Our research suggests that cutting out or down on sweetened diet drinks or replacing them with unsweetened coffee may naturally help lower your depression risk," said study author Honglei Chen, M.D., Ph.D. "More research is needed to confirm these findings, and people with depression should continue to take depression medications prescribed by their doctors."

In 2011, two studies presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2011 found individuals who drink diet soda daily may increase their risk of stroke, heart attack and vascular-related deaths by 61%.

### **Sources:**

American Academy of Neurology: Hold the Diet Soda? Sweetened Drinks Linked to Depression, Coffee Tied to Lower Risk