

Soda Consumption Dramatically Increases Risk of Stroke and Vascular Disease

By John Phillip, NaturalNews

Americans drink more than 216 liters of carbonated soft drinks each year, a number that continues to increase at an alarming rate. Many people use low-calorie diet soda in a futile effort to lose weight, yet find that these drinks have the opposite effect leading them to be overweight or obese. The high acid content in most carbonated beverages leaches calcium and other critical nutrients from the bone and tissues, significantly increasing disease risk over years of consumption.

Researchers from *Cleveland Clinic's Wellness Institute* and Harvard University have reported the result of a study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, the first to examine soda's affect on stroke risk and vascular diseases. Past studies have linked sugar-sweetened beverage consumption with weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, gout and coronary artery disease, but current research has implicated diet soft drink consumption with increased disease risk and weight gain due to depletion of essential minerals.

Lead study author Dr. Adam Bernstein noted *"Soda remains the largest source of added sugar in the diet... what we're beginning to understand is that regular intake of these beverages sets off a chain reaction in the body that can potentially lead to many diseases, including stroke."* Researchers analyzed soda consumption among 43,371 men and 84,085 women over a time span of nearly thirty years. During that time, 2,938 strokes were documented in women while 1,416 strokes were documented in men.

Carbonated beverage consumption associated with a 43 percent increased risk of heart attack.

This study emphasizes the inherent risks involved with consumption of sugar-sweetened or no-calorie soft drinks. Sweetened drinks contain high levels of glucose that lead to a rapid increase in blood glucose and insulin. Over time, this results in glucose intolerance, insulin resistance and systemic inflammation. Low and no calorie carbonated beverages contain artificial sweeteners including aspartame, known to overstimulate and excite brain neurons resulting in cellular death.

Further, artificial sweeteners of all types trick our digestive chemistry and hormone balance, leading to weight gain and metabolic instability. Diet soft drinks have also been shown to leach calcium from bones as our body attempts to compensate for the high acidic load delivered from the phosphoric acid content in the drink. The end result is higher risk of osteoporosis, stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Despite the millions of dollars spent by soda marketers to instill the virtues of drinking soda, there is nothing healthy about consuming any type of carbonated beverage. Regarding low calorie drinks,

researchers concluded "*older adults who drank diet soda daily had a 43% increased risk of heart attack or stroke compared to those that never drank diet soda.*" The study did note that drinking coffee was associated with a ten percent lower risk of stroke, compared to those drinking sweetened beverages. Substitute carbonated beverage consumption with an antioxidant packed cup of green tea or coffee to significantly reduce stroke and vascular disease risks.

Sources for this article include:

<http://www.ajcn.org/content/95/5/1190>