

# Just One Soda per Day can Cause Heart Attacks in Men

By J. D. Heyes, *NaturalNews.com*

You have no doubt heard that sugary, high-fructose soda is a major contributing factor to the nation's ever-growing waistline, but new research indicates that even in moderation, drinking just one soda a day is a major health risk, especially for men.

According to a new study published in the medical journal *Circulation*, a daily soda increases your heart risk, even if it's not leading to much weight gain.

The ingestion of such high concentrations of sugar "appears to be an independent risk factor for heart disease," says the study's lead author Frank Hu, M.D., a professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), in Boston.

"Continually subjecting our bodies to high amounts of glucose, to high blood sugar levels that trigger large secretions of insulin results in stresses that in the long run show up as high risk of heart disease and diabetes," the study's co-author, Dr. Walter Willett, told CBS News.

The study tracked 42,833 men over 22 years, following their diet, weight, smoking and exercise patterns. In the end, researchers discovered that men who drank a single 12-ounce soda per day increased their risk of heart attack by 20 percent.

## So much sugar, so little time

The researchers said a typical 12-ounce soda contains a whopping 10 teaspoons of sugar, which is a very large amount over a relatively short period of time. But they also said the study didn't necessarily confirm that sugar itself was to blame.

"It's very likely people who choose to drink sugared soft drinks actually have a variety of health habits that are not heart healthy, and it may well be those health habits that are responsible for the increase in risk," Willett said.

Still, the data was enough to confirm what scientists, dieticians, nutritionists and researchers have known for years.

"We already know that sugary beverages are associated with increased obesity, type 2 diabetes, and other metabolic issues," Hu said. "This adds further evidence that sugary beverages are detrimental to our health."

## Harmful effects of so much sugar

Sugar in excess is a major contributor to obesity. Researchers noticed that many people were reducing fat intake but either increased their intake of sugar or did not appreciably decrease it, leaving them scratching their heads as to why they were not dropping any weight.

But it is the primary culprit in other disease processes as well.

"Sugary beverages also are believed to promote inflammation, an immune-system response involved in both heart disease and insulin resistance, a major risk factor for type 2 diabetes," CNN reported, citing the Hu-Willett study, adding that sugary drinks increase belly fat, which can also increase a man's heart attack risk.

During the study, blood samples were taken from about 40 percent of men. The findings: "Men who consumed sugary beverages at least once a day had higher triglyceride levels, lower HDL levels, and higher levels of a marker of inflammation known as C-reactive protein (CRP)," said CNN. "They also had higher levels of leptin, a hormone that helps regulate metabolism."

The consumption of so much sugar - from soda and a wealth of other sources - as well as other high-fat, high-calorie processed foods, has led to record-high obesity rates, both among adults and children. The Centers for Disease Control estimated in 2010 that 34 percent of U.S. adults were obese, more than double the percentage 30 years ago. Meanwhile, the share of children who are obese - 17 percent - has tripled.

Some experts have hailed the fact that, only recently, the nation's beltline seems to have stopped growing. But others say that until it begins shrinking, we shouldn't be patting ourselves on the back.

"Until we see rates improving, not just staying the same, we can't have any confidence that our lifestyle has improved," Dr. David Ludwig, director of the Optimal Weight for Life Program at Children's Hospital Boston, told The New York Times.

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