

SODA – ALL RISK, NO BENEFIT

Soda is cheap, addictive, and readily available.

Soda is one of the highest caloric sources in the world. Nearly one in three children and teenagers in the U.S. are overweight or obese and sugary drinks are part of the problem. It's not just about calories. A 2005 study by the University of Texas Health Science Center showed that there's a 41 percent increased risk of being obese—and a 65 percent increased risk of becoming overweight during the next 8 years—for every can of diet soda a person consumes in a day. Diet sodas are very much a part of the problem.

Diet? A study at Boston University's School of Medicine linked diet soda with increased risk factors for heart disease and diabetes. To be more specific, the study "found adults who drink one or more sodas a day had about a 50 percent higher risk of metabolic syndrome," which is a cluster of risk factors such as excessive fat around the waist, low levels of "good" cholesterol, high blood pressure, and other symptoms that lead to heart disease and/or diabetes.

Soda outkills terrorists. A study out of the University of California, San Francisco, shows that soda has killed at least 6,000 Americans in the last decade. The burden of the diseases translated into a \$300 million to \$550 million increase in health care costs between 2000 and 2010. From the American Heart Association's 50th Annual Conference on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention, researchers estimated that the escalating consumption between 1990 and 2000 of soda and sugar-sweetened beverages led to 75,000 new cases of diabetes and 14,000 new cases of coronary heart disease.

The Frankenfood factor. Whether you consume regular or diet soda, you're getting genetically modified food, via high fructose corn syrup or aspartame. So far, this multibillion-dollar industry has kept these sweeteners on the shelves while alternative sweeteners meeting cost requirements are explored.

Bottle convenience. Bisphenol A (BPA) exists in the vast majority of the soft drinks. Even at very low doses, BPA can increase breast and ovarian cancer cell growth and the growth of some prostate cancer cells in animals.

Can convenience. The aluminum industry uses as much electricity as the entire continent of Africa. Aluminum mining accounts for a ton of toxic chemicals that are left behind for every ton of the metal produced.

It's the "real thing" . . . not exactly. It's a mixture of altered water (injected with carbon dioxide gas), artificial flavors (yes, "natural flavor" is artificial), artificial color, phosphoric acid, and its sole caloric source is a by-product of genetically modified corn production. A tooth soaked in soda will erode rapidly over a few weeks. Soda offers virtually no nutritional value.