

Side Effects of Drinking Diet Sodas

Although weight-loss articles often suggest drinking diet soda in place of full-calorie counterparts, health experts warn that the beverage's long-term side effects may not be worth the short-term benefit of consuming fewer calories.



Loss of Calcium

According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), high level of phosphates from diet soda leeches calcium out of the bones. Daily consumption of diet soda makes you three to four times more likely to suffer from a stress fracture and at an increased risk for osteoporosis.

Dehydration

Caffeine from diet soda triggers the kidneys to increase urine production, which results in an increased loss of water in the body. Dehydration can lead to dizziness, headaches, racing heartbeats and even death.



Aspartame

The low-calorie sweetener, aspartame, is found in most diet sodas. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) claims the ingredient is safe to consume; however, several side effects involving the ears, eyes, chest, skin, neurological system, gastrointestinal system and metabolic system, as well as psychological conditions, have been linked to its use. Hugo Rodier, M.D., author of "Sweet Death," suggests that drinking beverages containing aspartame leads to weight gain.

Benzene

In 2005, the FDA received reports that the carcinogen benzene was present in soft drinks containing benzoate salts and ascorbic acid. An FDA study found that the level of benzene in most drinks was below the U.S. standard for drinking water. The World Health Organization confirms that benzene causes cancer and that no safe level of exposure to benzene can be recommended.



Effects

People who regularly consume diet drinks may experience increased sugar cravings triggered by the drinks' artificial sweeteners, according to the Mayo Clinic. Though diet sodas contain fewer calories than regular sodas, they may encourage poor food choices in other areas. Soda drinkers accustomed to sugary-tasting drinks may begin to find non-sweetened foods bland.

Expert Insight

Adults who drink one or more regular or diet sodas each day may face a higher risk of developing metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, kidney stones and chronic kidney disease, according to the Mayo Clinic. Data from the Framingham Heart Study revealed a link between diet soda drinkers and heart disease and type 2 diabetes, the Cleveland Clinic points out. The author of the study, Dr. Ramachandran Vasan, suggests that regular and diet soda drinkers tend to follow diets high in fat and sugar and low in fiber. They also tend to lead a more sedentary lifestyle, suggests Vasan. Thus, some of the increased disease risks associated with diet sodas may have more to do with the dietary and lifestyle choices diet soda drinkers make than with the drinks themselves, according to the Cleveland Clinic and the Mayo Clinic.

Bottom Line

Drinking diet soda to lose weight may reduce your calorie intake, but it offers no nutritional benefits and could lead to negative health consequences over time. The ACSM recommends drinking water or mixing juice and water at a 1:1 ratio. Read more:

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/18690-side-effects-drinking-diet-soda/#ixzz2Ck1r1785>