

Food Friday, August 27, 2010

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Is soda bad for bones? 3 reasons to think before you drink

by The Editors of EatingWell Magazine, on Wed May 26, 2008 7:26am PDT 133 Comments Post a Comment Read More from This Author Report Abuse



Bone Health Recipe Collection.)

Although I never developed a regular soda habit, I'm an avid seltzer drinker and I love to mix carbonated waters and beverages in healthy summer cocktails. But I've heard that drinking seltzers, sodas or other carbonated drinks may harm your bones. So I asked Joyce Hendley, an EatingWell contributing editor, if that rumor is true. She wrote about this question in EatingWell's June issue. Her answer? "Perhaps."

3 reasons to think before you drink:

1. There's research that links drinking certain types of soda with weaker bones—but carbonation doesn't seem to be the problem. (Keep your bones strong with recipes from EatingWell's

2. Nutrition experts once believed caffeine could be the culprit. In a 2001 study out of Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, people lost measurable amounts of calcium after drinking caffeinated sodas. Drinking decaffeinated sodas didn't appear to have the same effect. As it turned out, though, people tended to make up for the losses by excreting less calcium later in the day. The researchers concluded that if sodas harm bones it's probably because people drink them in place of milk. (Make sure you're getting enough calcium with these delicious calcium-rich recipes.)

3. But another study, reported in 2006 by researchers at Tufts University in Boston, suggests that colas, specifically, might be problematic. Among the 1,413 women whose dietary records and bone-density scans they reviewed, those who drank a diet or regular cola at least three times a week over five years had significantly lower bone densities than those who sipped cola once a month or less. No such effect occurred with other carbonated drinks, even after researchers factored in intake of calcium from foods.

The likely cause? Phosphoric acid, which is unique to colas, says Katherine Tucker, Ph.D., lead author of the study. When the body breaks down this compound, the acidity (or concentration of free hydrogen ions) of the blood increases. To neutralize acidity, hydrogen ions bind with minerals, including calcium and magnesium. If they're not available in the blood, says Tucker, "the body draws calcium from bones." The occasional-cola drinker probably needn't worry. "The real risk is for those who drink cola every day," says Tucker. (Find out how to boost your bone health with EatingWell's diet tips and menus.)



Healthy summer drink recipes

Joyce's bottom line: There are plenty of good reasons to quit a regular soda habit; carbonation isn't one of them. In fact, sparkling mineral waters sometimes contain a little calcium and magnesium so they might even benefit bones. So skip the soda and try one of EatingWell's healthy recipes for summer drinks.

Here's a refreshing and low-calorie alternative to sugar-laden sodas:

Raspberry Spritzer Makes 2 servings

- 2 cups seltzer
2/3 cup frozen raspberries
2 sprigs fresh mint
3 ounces raspberry-flavored syrup or Chambord
Ice cubes

Combine seltzer, raspberries, mint and raspberry-flavored syrup (or Chambord) in a small pitcher. Pour over ice.

By Michelle Edelbaum

Michelle is the associate editor of interactive for EatingWell Media Group. In between editing and writing, she enjoys sampling the tasty results of the easy, healthy recipes that the EatingWell Test Kitchen cooks are working on.

Related Links from EatingWell:

- Soda isn't the only drink with hidden calories. Find out how many calories are in your favorite summer cocktails.
Video: Watch EatingWell's Healthy-in-a-Minute video for 3 Tips to Build Strong Bones.
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Posted by carol p Wed May 28, 2008 1:19pm PDT
ok, sumptious
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Posted by Vioki Thu May 29, 2008 8:24am PDT
IF YOU DRINK TO MUCH.
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Posted by Cranberry Lips Thu May 29, 2008 10:23am PDT
4. Sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Each year I see more and more type II diabetics and they seem to be getting younger and younger. I think this is directly related to refined sugars. The more sugar and sugary foods you eat, the more insulin your pancreas has to pump out. Insulin is what allows glucose to enter cells, so it can be used for energy. Over the course of several years, either the cells in your body become desensitized to insulin and won't allow it in, your pancreas gets shot for being in overdrive for so long, or both, and voila you become a type II diabetic, requiring pills that make your cells sensitive to insulin again, or you might even need insulin shots. Not fun.

I'll drink a Pepsi once in a great while, but I try to stay away from all sodas and drink mineral water when I need a carbonation fix. :)

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Posted by jak.rebel Thu May 29, 2008 11:53am PDT
I'll admit that I drink about one liter of cola a day but I don't drink alcohol or smoke so I guess I'll be okay. I never heard anybody say "He died from drinking too much soda".
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Posted by dhoochisoute Thu May 29, 2008 2:04pm PDT
yep, 1 soda a day is my only vice...i think i can live with that.
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Posted by DebbieL Thu May 29, 2008 3:03pm PDT
yes i drink soda every day and i know it is wrong and i am trying to quit drinking them so much and focus on drinking so much water but like with everything else it is hard to just stop drinking soda
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Posted by mona57 Thu May 29, 2008 5:28pm PDT
i like sodas too, but i drink the small ones that have 100 calories
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Posted by mina Thu May 29, 2008 6:21pm PDT
Dude I'm addicted to pop. sorry i don't call it "soda". I have it in the morning, before school. The afternoon. And before i go to bed. Looks like I'm fine, but on the chubby side. Oh well. =)
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Posted by Amanda Thu May 29, 2008 8:39pm PDT
All my life I have never been one to drink anything OTHER than soda. I tend to regurgitate water because I need the carbonation to allow gas to release from my stomach. But I truly dont think that the soda has affected my bone density, and heres why. I was in a massive car accident and it took a week after the wreck to show that I had 2 fractured ribs, one broken rib, and a fractured pelvis. The Dr took me the fractures looked like they were old wounds, even though they had only happened a week before. My bones heal so fast, that a pelvic fracture appeared to be several years old instead of a week old because my bones are so strong and healthy. I go through at LEAST 6 or 7 cans of diet soda a day. AND....get this...if I happen to try to drink anything other than soda, I get massive urinary tract infections. Soda is my bodys' form of water...Go Figure!!!!
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Posted by Designer Thu May 29, 2008 11:31pm PDT
had my 1st soda at 14!!it was taboo in our house,only milk based drinks were allowed...today i do the same,dont buy them so my 2 kids get to have it 1-3 times a month when we are out...i see people today down sodas as if it was water!we are going to have one really weak senior citizens in the next 40 years...already have unhealthy youths...
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