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Drinking Soda Can Paralyze You

Doctors are warning that excessive cola consumption can lead to anything from mild weakness to profound muscle paralysis. This is because the drink can cause your blood potassium to drop dangerously low. One Australian ostrich farmer needed emergency care for lung paralysis after drinking large amounts of cola.

Researchers believe that many people risk problems due to their intake. Dr. Clifford Packer says that, "We have every reason to think that it is not rare. With aggressive mass marketing, super-sizing of soft drinks, and the effects of caffeine tolerance and dependence, there is very little doubt that tens of millions of people in industrialized countries drink at least 2-3 liters of cola per day."

According to Packer, "It follows that the serum potassium levels of these heavy cola drinkers are dropping, in some cases, to dangerously low levels."

Excessive cola consumption has also been linked with obesity, diabetes and tooth and bone problems.

The latest study of cola-induced hypokalaemia makes a compelling argument that potassium depletion should be added to the long list of soft drink-related health problems.

Toxins in food - Dangers of Soda (Cola)

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Hypokalaemia -- abnormally low potassium concentration in your blood -- can manifest clinically by constipation and neuromuscular disorders ranging from muscle weakness to paralysis.

It is bad enough some of your skeletal muscles can be paralyzed by this electrolyte shift, but severe cases can result in cardiac arrhythmias and can kill you.

Normally, having low potassium levels will not cause any major problems as long as you're healthy. But even mild-to-moderate hypokalaemia may increase your risk of death if you have any of the following health conditions:

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cardiac ischaemia

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heart failure

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left ventricular hypertrophy

The problem is that if you're a chronic soda drinker, you're likely to develop obesity, hypertension and diabetes, which in turn will make you more vulnerable to the potentially lethal effects of chronically low potassium levels.

If you're still opting for soda as your main beverage choice, the following information may keep you from opening another can.

Ways Soda Damages Your Health

- Weight gain. Soda is a significant contributor to obesity. Drinking a single can a day translates to more than a pound of weight gain every month. And diet soda is just as likely to cause weight gain as regular, if not more. It may sound counterintuitive, but drinking diet soft drinks actually will NOT help you lose weight. Artificial sweeteners induce a whole set of physiologic and hormonal responses that actually make you gain extra pounds. (Not to mention the fact that artificial sweeteners are more dangerous for your health than high fructose corn syrup in many other ways.)
- Liver damage. Consumption of too many soft drinks puts you under increased risk for liver cirrhosis similar to the increased risk faced by chronic alcoholics.
- Tooth decay. Soda dissolves tooth enamel and is thought to be responsible for doubling or tripling the incidence of tooth decay. Soda's acidity is even worse for teeth than the solid sugar found in candy.
- Kidney stones and chronic kidney disease (CKD). Colas of all kinds are well known for their high phosphoric acid content, a substance that changes urine in a way that promotes kidney stone formation. Drinking one quart (less than three 12-ounce cans) of soda per week may increase your risk of developing kidney stones by 15 percent.

Soda consumption may also be associated with kidney damage, according to a recent study in published in the journal PloS One.
- Diabetes. Drinking soda stresses your body's ability to process sugar and increases your risk of metabolic syndrome and diabetes. Some scientists now suspect this may explain why the number of people with type 2 diabetes has increased by 90 percent in the last 10 years in western countries.
- Heartburn (acid reflux). Heavy consumption of soda is a strong predictor of heartburn.
- Osteoporosis. Soft drinks containing phosphoric acid are definitely linked to osteoporosis (a weakening of your skeletal structure) because they lead to lower calcium levels and higher phosphate levels in your blood. When phosphate levels are high and calcium levels are low, calcium is pulled out of your bones.
- Hypertension (high blood pressure). Experts have reasons to believe that overconsumption of soda leads to an increase in blood pressure. It doesn't matter if the soda is regular or diet.
- Heart disease. Heavy soda drinkers are more likely to develop risk factors for heart disease. Research shows that drinking more than one soft drink a day is associated with an increased risk of developing metabolic syndrome -- a group of symptoms such as central obesity, elevated blood pressure, elevated fasting blood sugar, elevated fasting triglycerides, and low levels of HDL or "good" cholesterol. Having three or more of the symptoms increases your risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Impaired digestion (gastrointestinal distress). Drinking soda, especially on an empty

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stomach, can upset the fragile acid-alkaline balance of your stomach and other gastric lining, creating a continuously acidic environment. This prolonged acid environment can lead to inflammation of your stomach and duodenal lining.

- Mental health problems. One Norwegian study found a clear association between soft drinks and hyperactivity, and additional links to other mental disorders.
- Gout. Another recent study found that people drinking two or more sugary soft drinks a day have an 85 percent higher risk of gout than those who drink less than one a month. Gout causes painful, swollen joints, usually in your lower limbs, caused when uric acid crystallizes out of your blood into your joints.

Input Control

The good news about all these shocking health facts is that taking soda off your shopping list is one of the easiest steps you can take to improve your health and longevity.

Replacing soda and other sugary drinks with clean, pure water may be one of the most important dietary changes you can implement that will have a major impact.

Remember, normalizing your insulin levels is one of the most powerful physical actions you can take to lower your risk of cancer along with all the other diseases and long-term chronic health conditions mentioned above. Fortunately, it is also the variable most easily influenced by making healthy food and beverage choices, along with exercise.

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Sources

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The International Journal of Clinical Practice May 13, 2009; 63(6); 833-835

Dr. Mercola's site