

Did You Know

New Research Suggests Sugar Substitutes May Make You Fat

According to early studies, the fake stuff could lead to overeating.

In a study, lab animals fed saccharin-sweetened yogurt, consumed more calories – and packed on more pounds – than the animals that ate the treat with sugar added.

Like humans, animals are conditioned to expect lots of calories from sweet-tasting foods. But it seems that *no-calorie* substitutes may put the brain and the body at odds.

The brain says, “Mmm, sweet and satisfying,” but the body says, “I need more.”

Time will tell if the results hold true in people, but there are already human studies linking diet soda to excess weight.

Adapted from:
www.realage.com

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Message from the President

Did you know that excessive consumption of soft drinks and alcoholic beverages is a major factor in today's obesity epidemic? Many of us have not been properly informed, and since the following well-written article caught my eye, I wanted to share it with you. Written by Dr. Bryant Stanford, health and fitness professor at Hanover College in Indiana, we are presenting the entire article with his permission. At its conclusion, we have added brief thoughts of our own about how caffeine and alcohol-based drinks also can affect your sleep.

Sincerely,
Mary O'Sullivan
President

Watch What You Drink

Soft Drinks and Alcoholic Beverages Pour on the Calories

We Americans like simple answers to complex problems. When it comes to obesity, we are bombarded with lots of reasons for it. There are so many, in fact, it's overwhelming for the average person to get his or her arms around the issue and mount an effective campaign.

As generals know, it's difficult to fight a war on more than one front. Yet we are told that we have to exercise, cut the fat content of our diets, reduce sugar intake, be tested for faulty “fat” genes, take drugs to control appetite, stop eating goodies to soothe emotional pain, stop eating in excess as a coping mechanism for stress, stop automatic eating in front of the TV... the list goes on.

Too Much Information

Although many of those factors likely are operating at any one time, contributing to obesity, it's best to pick just one and concentrate on it. Then when that one is conquered, go to the next. So what is the best one to choose as a starting point?

The more that I've thought about this, the more it makes sense to determine which factor has changed the most in the past 30 years – a time when we have emerged not only as the fattest nation the world has ever seen, but we are continually getting fatter, and we are getting fatter faster.

Those who know me as an advocate for exercise probably assume I'd point to our sedentary lifestyle as the key factor in rising obesity. It's important, but I doubt that we are substantially less active than we were three decades ago.

What about high-fat foods? Those who still embrace the Atkins diet and all the foolishness surrounding it no doubt expect me to point a finger there. Nope. As ridiculous as advocating eating chunks of cheese wrapped in bacon is, we are not consuming substantially more fat today.

Bulk from Beverages

We are consuming lots more calories each day compared with 30 years ago, and this is the culprit. Where do these extra calories come from? *Mostly from the beverages we drink.*

In the past 30 years, soft drinks have added, on average, 130 extra calories per day to our diet. Alcoholic beverages, mostly wine and beer, add 100 extra calories per day. Adding just 100 calories per day would total 36,500 in one year, contributing to an addition of 10 pounds of body fat.

Beverages are a special dietary challenge because they don't contribute to a feeling of fullness when consumed.

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You would notice adding a huge baked potato to your lunch on top of whatever else you normally might eat. You'd be stuffed and might not be able to finish it. But if you took in the same number of calories in the form of a big soft drink, or glasses of wine or beer, you wouldn't notice. Soft drinks also are consumed conveniently all day long, on the job, and even while driving.

A famous quote by Anthelme Brillat-Savarin is "Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you what you are." Putting this into contemporary terms, it would be appropriate to say, "Tell me what you drink, and I will tell you what you are." If you drink a lot of soft drinks and /or alcoholic beverages on a daily basis, the answer to who you are is likely to be "a fat person."

Hollow Calories and Tooth Decay

Soft drinks are especially problematic because they represent hollow calories – no nutrients that help the body. What's more, the sugar they contain is a prime factor in rotting your teeth.

Red wine, at least, contains helpful antioxidants. But other than that, as in soft drinks, it's best to view alcoholic beverages as high sugar drinks that add tons of hollow calories to your daily intake and that, like soft drinks, need to be rationed.

So step one in the battle of the bulge is to police what you drink. If you are a high consumer of sugary beverages, cut back for one year and you will be amazed and delighted at the results.

Source: The Courier Journal, Louisville, KY, August 28, 2008

What You Drink Can Affect Your Sleep

Not only can drinking large amounts of soft drinks increase daily calorie intake, but they also can disrupt sleep. The caffeine in colas is highly addictive and will stay in your system 6 or more hours. Consuming beverages that contain 250 milligrams of caffeine a day (2 or 3 colas) may even lead to a caffeine addiction. When you're addicted to caffeine, you require steadily increasing tolerance levels of the drug to remain alert. When your system goes below these tolerance levels, you feel tired and desire more caffeine. If caffeine levels drop below your system's requirements while you're sleeping, it will cause you to awaken affecting sleep quality.

Many people use a drink of alcohol before bedtime to help them sleep. While some find it helps them relax and fall asleep more easily, others find that after drinking alcohol, they can't sleep. Normally, everyone who has alcoholic drinks before bedtime has troubled and fragmented sleep. Alcohol initially is a relaxant, then after about 3 hours, the body metabolizes the alcohol and it becomes a stimulant, which also affects sleep quality.

Source: "Why Sleep? Your Guide to the Benefits of Sleep," Quanta Dynamics, Inc., 2003

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