Sugary Drinks of Any Kind Increase Diabetes Risk

But replacing these beverages with water, coffee or tea can reduce a person's risk of type 2 diabetes.

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Are you a frequent consumer of sugary beverages, both those with added or naturally occurring sugar? Take heed, as a new study published in the journal Diabetes Care reveals that people who drink too many of these drinks, including 100% fruit juices and artificially sweetened refreshments, are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, reports the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

For the study, researchers examined 22 to 26 years of data from more than 192,000 men and women to calculate changes in participants' consumption of sugary drinks. (Scientists adjusted for factors such as body mass index, other dietary changes and lifestyle habits.)

Results showed that increasing one's intake of sugary beverages by more than four ounces each day during a time span of four years upped individuals' risk of developing diabetes by 16% within the next four years. Diabetes risk was even higher (18%) for those who consumed the same amount of artificially sweetened beverages daily. (But researchers cautioned that this second finding might have occurred because people who are at high risk for diabetes may switch from sugary beverages to diet drinks and are more likely to be screened for the disease, which results in quicker diagnosis.)

But investigators did offer good news: Replacing just one daily serving of a sugary beverage with water, coffee or tea was associated with a 2% to 10% reduced risk of diabetes.

"The study results are in line with current recommendations to replace sugary beverages with noncaloric beverages free of artificial sweeteners," said Frank Hu, PhD, a professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the institution and senior author of the study. "Although fruit juices contain some nutrients, their consumption should be moderated."

Click here to read about how the excessive consumption of sugary drinks is linked to an increased risk of death.

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