

# FOCUS

ON NUTRITION



## WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT SODAS AND ENERGY DRINKS COULD HURT YOU

Do you enjoy drinking sodas or mainstream energy drinks? Do you tell yourself these beverages won't compromise your health? You may be surprised to learn that sodas have been wreaking havoc on our bodies for decades. And although the explosively popular energy drinks are relatively new compared to their soda counterparts, these sugar-laden, caffeine-centric beverages can also present health risks.

So what exactly are these fizzy drinks really doing to our bodies? The facts may concern you.

### Top 5 reasons to steer clear of these unhealthy beverages:

#### 1. They feed our obesity problem

More than two-thirds of Americans are overweight — and those numbers are rising as we become a society consumed with gulping down sodas and energy drinks. Americans are drinking twice as much soda as we did 25 years ago. On average, we drink about a gallon per person EVERY week! Study after study has shown a strong link between soda consumption and obesity. And it's no wonder. Each 12-ounce can of soda contains about 140 calories and 40 grams of sugar (10 teaspoons!). These empty calories are quickly stored as fat if they aren't burned.

#### 2. They spike our risk of developing diabetes

As obesity numbers have grown, diabetes rates have followed suit. According to a University of North Carolina study, there is a clear link between the consumption of sugary beverages and diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control reports that nearly 21 million Americans have diabetes, an increase of 14 percent since 2003. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that women who regularly drank sugar-sweetened sodas gained significantly more weight and had a

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greater risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

### 3. They take a toll on our healthy smiles

Everyone wants a great smile: it can land you the job of your dreams or even that dream date. But did you know most sodas and energy drinks contain dyes? These dark colors literally stain our teeth over time. And your mom was right, drinking soda really can rot your teeth. Sugary beverages like sodas and energy drinks often cause tooth decay due to both sugar and acid. Bacteria in the mouth feed on this sugar and then spit out acid on the teeth. This acid eats away the enamel, causing cavities.

### 4. They take our bodies on a roller coaster ride

Guzzling heaps of sugar and caffeine does more than crank up the heartbeat. It causes us to become jittery, restless and moody, making it difficult to focus. Beyond all that, it spikes our blood sugar levels. Caffeine is a stimulant that pushes our bodies into full alert. This sugar dump causes our blood sugar level to spike with available energy. As the caffeine wears off and our insulin response counters the sugar high, we lose our energy and feel lethargic. In layman's terms ... we CRASH!

### 5. They get us hooked

Because soda and energy drinks are loaded with caffeine, it can develop into an addiction. Here's what happens: You're riding the sugar highs and lows through your days from drinking this "liquid candy," and before long your body is craving the mind-altering stimulant. It can be a tough habit to break. By slowly reducing your intake, you can be soda and energy drink free. Trust us, your body will thank you.

### Closing thoughts

If you love soda or sugary energy drinks, these five reasons are just the start to the health problems you are flirting with. You have the opportunity every day to make a dramatic impact on your health. Would you rather satisfy your taste buds now, or enjoy a long and healthy life later? Drink to your health!



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### Tom Lunneborg

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