

# New study finds potential link between daily consumption of diet soft drinks and risk of vascular events

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Individuals who drink diet soft drinks on a daily basis may be at increased risk of suffering vascular events such as stroke, heart attack, and vascular death. This is according to a new study by Hannah Gardener and her colleagues from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and at Columbia University Medical Center. However, in contrast, they found that regular soft drink consumption and a more moderate intake of diet soft drinks do not appear to be linked to a higher risk of vascular events. The research appears online in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, published by Springer.

In the current climate of escalating [obesity rates](#), artificially sweetened soft drinks are marketed as healthier alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages, due to their lack of calories. However, the long-term health consequences of drinking diet soft drinks remain unclear.

Gardener and team examined the relationship between both diet and regular soft drink consumption and risk of stroke, [myocardial infarction](#) (or heart attack), and vascular death. Data were analyzed from 2,564 participants in the NIH-funded Northern Manhattan Study, which was designed to determine [stroke incidence](#), risk factors and prognosis in a multi-ethnic urban population. The researchers looked at how often individuals drank soft drinks - diet and regular - and the number of vascular events that occurred over a ten-year period.

They found that those who drank diet soft drinks daily were 43 percent more likely to have suffered a vascular event than those who drank none, after taking into account pre-existing vascular conditions such as metabolic syndrome, diabetes and high blood pressure. Light diet soft drink users, i.e. those who drank between one a month and six a week, and those who chose regular soft drinks were not more likely to suffer vascular events.

Gardener concludes: "Our results suggest a potential association between daily diet soft drink consumption and vascular outcomes. However, the mechanisms by which [soft drinks](#) may affect vascular events are unclear. There is a need for further research before any conclusions can be drawn regarding the potential health consequences of diet soft drink consumption."

**More information:** Gardener H et al (2012). Diet soft drink consumption is associated with an increased risk of vascular events in the Northern Manhattan Study. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. [DOI 10.1007/s11606-011-1968-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-011-1968-2)

Provided by Springer

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