

Sugar-sweetened drinks linked to increased risk of heart disease in men

March 12 2012

Men who drank a 12-ounce sugar-sweetened beverage a day had a 20 percent higher risk of heart disease compared to men who didn't drink any sugar-sweetened drinks, according to research published in *Circulation*, an American Heart Association journal.

"This study adds to the growing evidence that sugary beverages are detrimental to [cardiovascular health](#)," said Frank B. Hu, M.D., Ph.D., study lead author and professor of nutrition and epidemiology in the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Mass. "Certainly, it provides strong justification for reducing sugary [beverage consumption](#) among patients, and more importantly, in the general population."

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. [Risk factors](#) include obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, diabetes and [poor diet](#).

Researchers, who studied 42,883 men in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study, found that the increase persisted even after controlling for other risk factors, including smoking, [physical inactivity](#), alcohol use and family history of heart disease. Less frequent consumption — twice weekly and twice monthly — didn't increase risk.

Researchers also measured different lipids and proteins in the blood, which are indicators, or biomarkers, for heart disease. These included the inflammation marker C-reactive protein (CRP), harmful lipids called triglycerides and good lipids called high-density lipoproteins (HDL).

Compared to non-drinkers, those who consumed sugary beverages daily had higher triglyceride and CRP and lower HDL levels.

Artificially sweetened beverages were not linked to increased risk or biomarkers for heart disease in this study.

Beginning in January 1986 and every two years until December 2008, participants answered questionnaires about diet and other health habits. They also provided a blood sample midway through the survey. Follow-up was 22 years.

Participants were primarily Caucasian men 40-75 years old. All were employed in a health-related profession.

Health habits of the men in the study may differ from those of the general public, but findings in women from the 2009 Nurses' Health Study were comparable, Hu said.

The [American Heart Association](#) recommends no more than half of discretionary calories come from added sugars. For most American men, that's no more than 150 calories per day and 100 for most American women. Discretionary calories are those left in your "energy allowance" after consuming the recommended types and amounts of foods to meet all daily nutrient requirements.

More information: Additional Resources:

-- Sugar-sweetened beverages are the No. 1 source of added sugars in our diet. The American Heart Association recommends you limit sugar sweetened beverages to no more than 450 calories from beverages a week (based on a 2000-calorie per day diet). Better still, choose water or unsweetened teas. For more information, visit www.heart.org/nutrition .

-- Heart-Health Risk Assessments from the American Heart Association
-[www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Condi ... M_306929_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Condi...M_306929_Article.jsp)

-- Heart Attack - [www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Condi ...
1092_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Condi...1092_SubHomePage.jsp)

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: Sugar-sweetened drinks linked to increased risk of heart disease in men (2012, March 12) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-03-sugar-sweetened-linked-heart-disease-men.html>

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