

Drinking sugar-sweetened soft drinks leads to fat gain

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(Medical Xpress) -- New research from Bangor University has shown that regularly drinking sugar sweetened soft drinks can increase fat gain, inhibit fat metabolism, and increases blood glucose in your body. So if you're thirsty and think of reaching for a sugary soft drink- don't - it can compromise your long-term health. Reach for water instead.

What the research proved was that regularly drinking [soft drinks](#) changes the way our muscles use food as fuel, making them prefer to burn sugars over fats. They also showed that these changes are lasting.

Additionally the researchers showed that isolated muscle cells identify and respond to the sugary diet, and switch how they use the fuel, in a similar way to the subjects in the soft drink study. The switch to an inefficient metabolism was seen in the participants who were lightly active, lean male and females drinking soft drinks for only four weeks.

These factors show that regular use of sugar sweetened soft drinks drives alterations in your muscles similar to those found in people with obesity problems and type 2 diabetes.

Dr. Hans-Peter Kubis, who led the research at the University's School of Sport, Health & Exercise Sciences, explains: "This study proves that our concerns over sugary drinks have been correct. Not only can regular sugar intake acutely change our body metabolism; in fact it seems that our muscles are able to sense the sugars and make our metabolism more inefficient, not only in the present but in the future as well. This will lead

a reduced ability to burn fat and to fat gain. Moreover, it will make it more difficult for our body to cope with rises in blood sugar. What is clear here is that our body adjusts to regular soft drink consumption and prepares itself for the future diet by changing muscle [metabolism](#) via altered gene activity – encouraging unhealthy adaptations similar to those seen in people with obesity problems and type 2 diabetes.”

“Together with our findings about how drinking soft drinks dulls the perception of sweetness, our new results give a stark warning against regularly drinking sugar sweetened drinks,” Kubis concludes.

Kubis’ opinion is that the government needs to take action to address the problem of soft drink consumption: “Clearly taxation on sugary drinks is overdue. This money could be invested in the NHS where it is urgently needed to treat people with obesity problems and diabetes.

The results were based on experiments carried out at Bangor University’s, College of Health and Behavioral Sciences in collaboration with Huntsman Cancer Institute, University Utah, USA.

A paper reporting the findings was published in the *European Journal of Nutrition*.

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Provided by Bangor University

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