

Teen health risk rises with more than a can of soft drink a day

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(Medical Xpress)—Teenagers who drink more than one standard can (375g) of sugary drinks a day are putting themselves at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease such as heart disease or stroke in later life.

New research from the Raine Study at Perth's Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (TICHR) - an affiliate of The University of Western Australia - found that teenagers who drank about a can of [soft drink](#) a day had lower levels of 'good' cholesterol and higher levels of the 'bad' triglyceride form of fat in their blood, regardless of whether they were overweight.

Based on a combination of factors associated with type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease - including weight, blood pressure and [cholesterol levels](#) - these teenagers were at higher risk of developing cardio-[metabolic disease](#) later in life.

The study, published in the latest edition of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, followed more than 1400 teenagers aged between 14 and 17 years from the Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort (Raine) Study.

Lead researcher and UWA Adjunct Senior Research Fellow Dr Gina Ambrosini conducted the analyses at Britain's MRC Human Nutrition Research in Cambridge.

"It is already widely accepted that a high consumption of [sugary drinks](#) increases obesity risk in young people," Dr Ambrosini said.

"What is important about this study is that excessive sugary drink consumption appears to increase risk factors for [type 2 diabetes](#) and cardiovascular disease, even in young people who are not overweight.

"This study shows that greater intakes of sugary drinks may put young people on a path to the early development of risk factors associated with diabetes and cardiovascular disease."

The study's co-author and head of nutrition research at the Telethon Institute, UWA Adjunct Professor Wendy Oddy, said the findings also suggested parents had an important role in monitoring teenagers' sugary drink consumption.

She said results from the latest Australian National Nutrition Survey found 55 per cent of all sugary drinks were consumed at home and low-income families drank more sugary drinks and had a higher risk of obesity.

"This highlights the potential for parents to influence how much sugary drink their children consume because parents are the main purchaser of food and beverages consumed at home," Professor Oddy said.

"Consumption should be moderate so if kids are drinking a lot of sugary drinks, they should drink less. Water is the best option, or parents should consider switching to lower sugar alternatives or diet drinks."

Adjunct Professor Oddy said a better understanding of the relationship between sugary drink intake and the increased risk of cardiovascular disease in [young people](#) was required to develop public health and nutrition policies to tackle this issue.

More information: www.rainestudy.org.au/

Provided by University of Western Australia

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