

Soda s the bad guy, again

By ACSH Staff — August 8, 2013



[1]Soda is being [attacked again](#) [2], this time by doctors from Mount Sinai

Medical Center in New York City and University Hospitals Case Medical Centers in Cleveland, Ohio. According to a study done by Yale University in 2011, each American consumes an average of 45 gallons of sugar-sweetened beverages each year. And over 69 percent of adults are considered overweight or obese. That doesn't automatically mean that soda is causing obesity, although these doctors seem to think so.

Dr. Christopher Ochner, assistant professor of pediatrics and adolescent medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai brings up one relevant point, The main thing is excess calories. And yes, consuming excess calories will lead to weight gain. This is a well-known fact regardless of where the calories are coming from. However, he takes this a step further when he suggests that in fact, all calories are not created equal, and sugar calories are actually converted to fat more easily by the body. He also says that when people drink calories, their bodies do not register fullness, and therefore they tend to consume more calories than they would if they were ingesting them in solid form.

And besides those extra pounds gained from drinking soda, Dr. Mary Ann McLaughlin, medical director of the cardiac health program and co-director of the women's cardiac assessment and risk evaluation program at Mount Sinai says that drinking soda can actually increase risk of unhealthy heart. She says, Caffeine can increase heart rate and blood pressure, and too much sodium over the course of the day can increase food [sic] retention. We're pretty sure she meant fluid retention, but we know that excess sodium can increase fluid retention that has nothing to do uniquely with soda, nor is the amount of concern.

Of course the article also goes on to attack diet soda, using none other than the study we [skewered](#) [3] a few weeks ago which was actually just an opinion piece written by Dr. Susan E. Swithers from Purdue University. The essence of her argument was that artificially-sweetened beverages are equivalent to sugar-sweetened beverages in their roles in causing obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. And the majority of the studies she uses to support her claims are rodent studies that she herself authored.

However, the article does end with a bit of refreshingly sane nutrition advice. Everything in

moderation !Very few things in moderation are really going to hurt you.

ACSH s Ariel Savransky adds, This attack once again, is unnecessarily aimed at soda. Some of the points addressed in this article may be true, such as excess calories causing weight gain, and excess sodium causing fluid retention. But that still does not make soda unique. And the fact that no studies were cited in the article and the one reference made refers to an opinion piece, makes the claims in the article hard to believe.

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[1] <http://acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/soda.jpg>

[2] <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2013/08/07/soda-public-health-enemy-no-1/>

[3] <http://acsh.org/2013/07/sour-study-on-artificial-sweeteners-why-the-headlines/>