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What's in your Beverage?

By Marie-Claude Beaulieu, RHN, ART, MLT - Holistic Nutritionist

We all have our food, beverage or lifestyle “vices”. Are your beverage related? Are these beverages part of your weight gain, or are they stopping you from your weight loss goals? Are they a causal factor in your physical or mental health issue?

A study done on children at Barwon-South Western region, Australia, from their University's Faculty of Health showed that children who drank > 2 glasses of fruit juices per day were more likely to be overweight or obese compared to children who did not drink these drinks. "These drinks contribute high amounts of energy to kids' diets', yet they don't make them feel full."

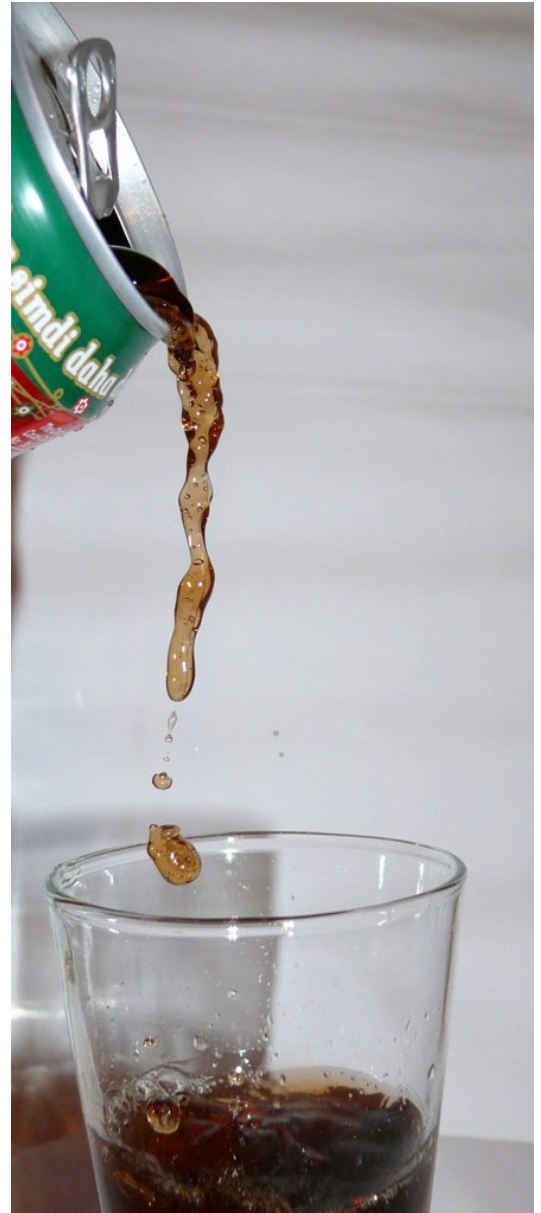
Studies also show that drinking one fruit juice a day increases your odds of developing type II diabetes. Fruit juices have lots of natural sugar that come into the bloodstream very rapidly and can affect insulin levels, while eating a whole fruit takes longer for its sugar to be digested and breakdown in the body.

Soda and juice drinkers also tend not to drink enough water for health. The number one source of calories in the American diet is from soda, in the form of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Fructose, including the one from fruit juice, is very detrimental to anyone who struggles with insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol. This typically goes hand in hand with overweight and obesity.

Soda drinkers are less likely to get sufficient vitamin A, calcium, or magnesium. Sugar depletes magnesium, and the high levels of phosphoric acid in soft drinks can combine with calcium and magnesium in the gut to cause a loss of these vital minerals. People who drink a lot of soda pop are more prone to osteoporosis and bone fractures than those who do not. The acidic nature of the drink (due to its high phosphorus content), tends to lower the body's calcium level and “leaches” it out of the bones. A low calcium and high phosphorus ratio also increases the incidence of hypertension.

Soft drinks are also a high source of caffeine in kids' diet, containing about 45 – 100 mg depending on the soft drink or energy beverage. “Diet” drinks are anti-nutrients that deplete your body of minerals and create further cravings for snacks and refined sugary foods, due to a faulty insulin response.

There is a theory that claims a link between taste and calories which keeps track of how much eating has occurred. Sugar substitutes like saccharin, sucralose, aspartame, etc; release the taste of sweetness from the food taken. The taste buds tell the brain that food (calories thus



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energy) is on the way. But it is not getting this awaited energy. It undermines the ability to judge how much food we are consuming and leads to overeating.

Some studies show that consumption of diet soda correlates with weight gain (Univ. of Texas Health Science at San Antonio, Fowler SP, and colleagues); stating that the undelivered expected calories stimulates appetite. "There was a 41% increase in the risk of being overweight for every can or bottle of diet soft drink a person consumes each day," Fowler says.

The Framingham Heart Study in Massachusetts stated that diet soda consumption correlated with metabolic syndrome (48% at higher risk of weight gain and elevated blood sugar), stating that the diet soda consumer has higher craving for sugar flavoured sweets instead of healthy foods. "Although our study adjusted for lifestyle factors, it is known that people who regularly drink soft drinks- even diet sodas- are also known to eat foods that are higher in calories and fat, and gets less physical activity", said Ramachandran Vasan, M.D. senior author of the paper.

Aspartame in diet drinks and diet foods has been linked to various health concerns. Sleep disorders, fatigue, rashes, leukemia's, neurological disorders (headaches, seizures, memory loss ...), joint pain, visual changes, diabetes and many more. In 1991 the National Institutes of Health listed 167 possible side-effect symptoms of aspartame. One 12 ounce diet soda contains about 180 mg of aspartame which equals approximately 4 and a half packets of NutraSweet (Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev. September 2006;15(9):1654–9). The FDA receives more complaints about aspartame than any other food additive. But it has never been banned.



Splenda/sucralose is simply chlorinated sugar; a chlorocarbon. Chlorine is a highly excitable element used as a biocide in bleach, disinfectants, insecticide, and hydrochloric acid. It has been shown to cause swollen liver, calcification of the kidneys, cancer, birth defects, and immune system destruction in animals (James Bowen, M.D., The Lethal Science of Splenda, May 2005).

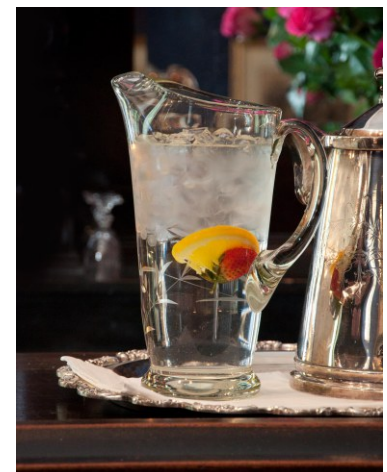
Soda is the subject of bans at schools and higher sales taxes for very good reasons, not just for the sugar content.

Flavored waters seem healthier than soda. But beware! They are usually loaded with sugar, and problematic additives. "There is an indication that these drinks are potentially erosive and people should recognise that." (Dr. Catriona Brown, a consultant paediatric dentist at the Birmingham Dental Hospital).



Water, beautiful clear alkaline water!

Drinking the required amount of water daily has many benefits. It can help you lose weight, and flush down the by-products of fat breakdown. It is needed for the electrical conductivity of the body, it clears up your thinking, and it can relieve headaches. It hydrates the skin, moisturizes it and makes one look younger. It is needed to regulate your body temperature and gives you energy. Water can relieve cramps, lubricates the joints, relieve constipation and eliminate toxins from the body via the different organs of elimination. Drink your 8-10 glasses of water daily.



Add lemon to your water for a gentle cleanse; it will improve your digestion and immune system. Plus it tastes great! Replace carbonated drinks and fruit juices with water for health!

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Marie-Claude (RHN) is a Holistic Nutritionist who graduated with a certificate of Distinguished Merit from the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition (CSNN). She was diagnosed with Celiac in 2007, and her personal experience with Celiac for her and many of her family members lead to continued research & studies in Immunology, Nutrition & natural methods of healing the body. She brings along more than 30 years of medical experience, and specializes in Celiac disease and gut health (marie-claude@effectivehealth.ca).