



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone: (651) 602-7900  
FAX: (651) 602-7914

---

Transmitted via Email

September 14, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 360-4-34

SUBJECT: PER – SAFETY AND HEALTH

Purpose. To provide information on drinking soda and soft drinks.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005

For many people, drinking soda has become a daily habit. Soda accounts for more than a quarter of all beverages consumed in the United States. On average every person in the USA drinks 12 ounces of soda per day. One 12 ounce can per day equals over 40 gallons per year. In a study of 4,000 children and teenagers, children aged 2-5, 34% consume soda, 53% consume juice and 75% consume milk. In the children ages 12-17, 65% consume soda, 34% consume juice and 63% of boys and 49% of girls consume milk. As the age increased, so did the soda consumption.

Soda has no nutritive value and many people are substituting soda as their beverage of choice rather than drinking water and milk. Soda and other types of similar beverages are very high in fructose-laden corn syrup. They also contain additives and artificial flavorings and colors. One 12 ounce can of regular soda has approximately 9 teaspoons of sugar. If a person drinks one can per day this equals 30 lbs of sugar in one year. Because there are no nutrients in the soft drink, the body will use its present store of vitamins and minerals to metabolize these drinks. Therefore, excessive intake of soft drinks will deplete the body of stored nutrients. In addition, phosphorous is used to make carbonated beverages fizzy. If the amounts of phosphorous become excessive from drinking too much “fizz”, it competes for the same receptor sites in the body as calcium which is needed especially in children’s bodies as their bones and teeth are forming and growing. Too much phosphorous robs the body of calcium. Lack of calcium may lead to low bone mass which increases the risk of osteoporosis.

Today the number of obesity has risen to 15% and another 15% are heading in that direction. This is due to several factors including the decrease in physical activity but also due to poor diet choices. The chance of a child becoming obese increases by 1.6% for each additional can/glass of sweetened soft drink a child consumes above the daily average. According to one source, teenagers consume between 500-1000 calories per day from sweetened drinks. Obesity takes a toll on the human body increasing the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, infertility, gall-bladder disease, osteoarthritis and many forms of cancer.

You may be thinking how diet soft drinks affect your health. Diet soft drinks are flavored with artificial sweeteners. Our bodies react to these artificial sweeteners as if they were sugar and this triggers hormonal responses especially increased insulin development. Excessive amounts of insulin in the body are associated with several diseases such as adult on-set diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, etc. Diet soda also contains acid just like sugar-sweetened soda does. This acid is very hard on the enamel of our teeth.

If you consume a large amount of soda and other soft drinks, you may want to cut back on your consumption gradually. Habits are hard to break and you may get a headache for a few days as your body adjusts to the lack of caffeine from the caffeinated beverages consumed. Replace your soda with other beverages such as water, milk and 100% fruit juices which are good sources for vitamin C and others.

Eating right is a challenge for all of us. We make many daily choices and choosing what we drink is one of those choices. However, our bodies are worth that effort!

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

DIST: AE