

Nutrition Tip

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Diet Soda Link to Heart Disease May Be All Fizz

Earlier this week it was reported that drinking diet soda may increase your risk for heart disease. Before you POP, let's talk about this one!

The study published in the American Heart Association Journal Circulation found a possible link between drinking sodas and a cluster of conditions known as "metabolic syndrome". These conditions are considered risk factors for heart disease and include high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, a large waist measurement, high blood fats and low good cholesterol. The proposed association is between people who drink even one can of any kind of soda, regular or diet and a higher risk for heart disease than people who do not drink soda.

A few things to consider before you visit a cardiologist:

1. Drinking soda is considered a marker for an overall unhealthy lifestyle
2. Drinking soda, whether regular or diet, may increase your taste for sweet foods which may increase your overall calorie consumption and your weight
3. Drinking soda may take the place of drinking healthier beverages like water and milk
4. Drinking diet soda is a marker for a desire to lose weight, which may already put you in the category of "at risk for metabolic syndrome"

Basically, what this study indicates is that drinking soda may be a marker of diet and lifestyle patterns that raise your risk of metabolic syndrome or heart disease, it absolutely does NOT show a cause in and of itself! As a registered dietitian, I do not believe that even one can of regular soda a day would be likely to create metabolic syndrome on its own! More importantly, because diet soda, or water for that matter, does not add calories it cannot increase weight and therefore cannot increase risk factors for heart disease on its own!

An interesting note, the American Heart Association (publisher of this study) has released a statement about the article stating that "no calorie beverages (ie diet soda) and low fat/non-fat dairy foods are effective to cut calories and aid in the prevention of risk factors for heart disease".