

# The Worst Soda Habits for Your Waistline, Says Expert



There's nothing quite as American as a hamburger, side of fries, and an ice-cold soda. While some regions of the country call it "pop" or "coke," the calorie content is all the same. Generally speaking, this type of carbonated beverage isn't ideal for a healthy, balanced diet. And if you're trying to lose or maintain weight, soda often has the opposite impact on your waistline. In fact, **soda drinks are the source of several serious health issues due to the sugar content**, according to Dr. Kathleen Winston, the dean at the College of Nursing for the University of Phoenix. Not only do these beverages have unnatural substances, but they don't offer any minerals, fiber, or vitamins. Truly, they're only empty

calories that pack on the pounds—especially if you regularly partake in any of these worst soda habits.

If you crave one glass here-and-there on occasion, you're likely fine. But if you partake in these worst soda habits regularly, it's time to make a change. Then, be sure to read our list of the 112 Most Popular Sodas Ranked by How Toxic They Are.

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## **Thinking diet soda is better**



In an effort to prevent weight gain, many people decide to swap out their regular soda for the diet variety. While this does decrease sugar somewhat, Dr. Winston says research has shown that diet soda beverages are linked to more belly fat, obesity, and the development of metabolic syndrome.

"The 'diet beverage' is misleading," she says. "Like its sugar beverage counterpart, the 'diet soda' is also carbonated, which has been found to increase appetite and it increases the desire for sweetness and causes the individual to crave sugar."

In fact, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* conducted over 10 years, folks who regularly downed diet soda had a waist circumference four times larger than those who refrained from pop guzzling.

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## **Regularly drinking super-sized sodas**



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In case you aren't familiar, a large soda from a fast-food restaurant could contain around 390 calories and 77 grams of added sugar. That's more than double the recommended daily amount, which for women is 25 grams per day and 36 grams for men, according to [Serena Poon](#), a certified nutritionist and celebrity chef.

"Researchers are increasingly finding added sugar to contribute to a variety of health problems," she shares. "Consistently overeating added sugar could not only lead to weight gain, but it can also contribute to the development of conditions such as inflammation, chronic disease, and heart



problems."

Here's The Difference Between Sugar and Added Sugar on a Nutrition Label.

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## **Not thinking about how soda can increase depression**



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In most diet sodas, you'll find the ingredient aspartame. This added sugar crosses the blood-brain barrier and can increase depression, according to Shelia Forman, PhD, a

psychologist and mindful eating instructor.

"Aspartame can increase the number of certain chemicals in the brain that inhibits the release of feel-good neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin," she explains. "Without ample amounts of dopamine and serotonin circulating in our brains, we may become depressed."

While studies around the neurological effects aspartame can have on your brain are still required to make a proper evaluation, it's still important to note the connection between food cravings and mental health. Instead of soda, turn to these Popular Foods That Are Supporting Your Mental Health, Says Expert.

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**Drinking soda instead of water when you're thirsty**



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When you're dehydrated, your body signals your brain to remind you to drink up. However, if you reach for soda instead of water, you're not helping your symptoms but rather masking them.

As Poon explains, our bodies are made up of 60% of water content, and we need to stay hydrated for all of our cells to function correctly.

"If you do like to drink soda, it is important that you drink these sweet beverages in addition to your daily water intake," she says. "Soda is not a hydrating beverage, and



research suggests that it can be detrimental to your health to drink soda in place of water on a hot day."

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## Forgetting how many calories are in soda



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While we've covered what the biggest-of-the-big offers in terms of calories, playing it on the tiny side isn't ideal either, Poon warns. In fact, even a small soda contains about 150 calories.



"While this isn't a lot on its own, if you are drinking two to three sodas per day, these calories can add up," says Poon. "Many people don't consider beverages when they are thinking of their overall consumption, in which case you could be drinking hundreds of calories over your recommended daily consumption."

Also, because sodas are void of any nutritional benefits, they're merely empty calories that cause you to feel hungrier sooner.