

SOFT DRINKS LINKED TO HEALTH PROBLEMS

"Soft drinks are the single greatest source of caffeine in children's diets; a 12-ounce can of cola contains about 45 milligrams but the amounts in more potent soft drinks can exceed 100 milligrams - a level approaching that found in coffee," according to Marion Nestle, author of "Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health."

"Soft drinks have replaced milk in the diets of many American children as well as adults. School purchases reflect such trends. From 1985 to 1997, school districts decreased the amounts of milk they bought by nearly 30 percent and increased their purchases of carbonated sodas ... "Sugar and acid in soft drinks so easily dissolve tooth enamel."

"The acidity of cola beverages ... is about the same as vinegar. The sugar content masks the acidity, and children little realize they are drinking this strange mixture of phosphoric acid, sugar, caffeine, coloring, and flavoring matter," according to a nutritionist at the Naval Medical Research Institute.

"One liter of an aspartame-sweetened beverage can produce about 56 milligrams of methanol. When several of these beverages are consumed in a short period of time (one day, perhaps), as much as 250 milligrams of methanol are dumped into the bloodstream, or 32 times the EPA limit," writes Carol Simontacchi, author of "The Crazy Makers: How the Food Industry Is Destroying Our Brains and Harming Our Children."

"The aspartame contained in many diet soft drinks, when consumed in large quantities, may contribute to the development of brain tumors, according to Samuel S. Epstein, M.D., author of "The Safe Shopper's Bible." He said: "Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is used extensively in soft drink containers. PET bottles can release small amounts of dimethyl terephthalate into foods and beverages. Although the National Cancer Institute claims that dimethyl terephthalate is noncarcinogenic, these results have been questioned. Some experts believe this compound to be carcinogenic."

"Aspartame contains methyl or wood alcohol, which can affect fetal brain development," according to Dr. Earl Mindell's "New Vitamin Bible."

"Twenty-one percent of the sugar in the American diet comes from soft drinks! That's more than just an unhealthy consumption of empty calories. It is a dangerous overload of caffeine and potentially hazardous, nutrient-depleting additives ...

"Cola drinks can interact adversely with antacids, possibly causing constipation, calcium loss, hypertension, nausea, vomiting, headaches, and kidney damage."

Those consuming at least one cup of a caffeine- containing soft drink are more prone to PMS - and the more caffeine they consume, the more severe their PMS symptoms, claims Jean Carper, author of "Food: Your Miracle Medicine."

"Tooth loss, periodontal disease, and gingivitis can be problems, especially with a high phosphorus intake, particularly from soft drinks," according to Elson M. Haas, M.D., author of "The Detox Diet."

"High in phosphorus and phosphoric acid, [soft drinks] infiltrate bodily fluids and corrode stomach linings, upset the alkaline-acid balance of the kidneys, and eat away at your liver," said Barnet Meltzer, M.D., author of "Food Swings."

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