



Though most people are wise to the fact that soda isn't exactly a nutrient-filled drink, you may be wondering just how much enjoying a soda every day actually affects your health. If you haven't thought about it, it's worth considering. After all, it's the daily habits that affect us the most. Just how much does drinking soda every day impact health? Keep reading to find out.

### Short-Term Effect

First, it's helpful to know what soda is made of before getting into how it affects the body. Virtually all sodas are made with carbonated water, a sweetener (typically sugar, high fructose corn syrup or artificial sweetener), phosphoric acid which contributes to the taste of soda and extends its shelf life and natural flavorings. Some types of soda have caffeine. On average, one can or bottle of regular soda contains 155 calories, 38 grams of carbs, 37 grams of sugar and 34 milligrams of caffeine. To put this in perspective, the American Heart Association recommends capping sugar at 25 grams a day for women and 36 grams a day for men — less than what's in one can of soda. As for caffeine, the Food and Drug Administration advises keeping it under 400 milligrams a day. Registered dietitian Sonya Angelone says there are a few ways daily soda intake can affect the body right away.

First, you're going to notice a spike in your energy from the caffeine and sugar. Angelone explained that caffeine blocks adenosine, which is a neurotransmitter that makes you feel tired. At the same time, the simple carbohydrates in soda from the sugar are absorbed quickly in the bloodstream, which also contributes to the energy boost. But Angelone says that the energy

from soda is short-lived and eventually your energy will plummet. Dr. Supriya Rao, a quadruple board-certified physician in internal medicine, gastroenterology and obesity medicine, says that there are ways soda affects the gut right away, too. She said some people experience bloating and gas from the carbonation and sugar. In fact, she said that drinking soda every day can disrupt the gastrointestinal system, causing people who drink soda every day to experience abdominal pain, diarrhea or constipation regularly. She explained that this is because all the sugar in the soda is feeding the “bad” bacteria in the gut and breaking down the integrity of the gut lining.

### Long-Term Consequences

Short-term, soda can cause your energy to blast off, then drop and could give you a stomachache. What about long term? Regenerative medicine specialist Dr. Neil Paulvin says that if you drink soda every day, you’re likely going to gain weight, specifically belly fat. “Belly fat can be dangerous, increasing the likelihood of heart disease, metabolic syndrome, Type 2 diabetes and breast cancer. Long-term, not only can a regular soda habit increase the likelihood of those conditions, it’s also been linked to kidney disease, high blood pressure and high cholesterol,” he explained.

Paulvin says that drinking soda every day can have detrimental health consequences, particularly for the heart, key info to know considering that cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. and it is largely preventable through healthy diet and lifestyle habits. “Some studies have found that soda drinkers, regardless of whether they drink regular or diet, have a higher risk of heart disease and stroke,” he said. Drinking soda every day isn’t great for your brain, either. Paulvin says high blood-sugar levels, which soda can cause, lead to inflammation in the brain. In fact, regularly drinking soda has been scientifically linked to higher levels of depression and a greater likelihood of getting dementia.

### Can you bypass consequences with diet soda?

Unfortunately, all three experts say that diet soda has been scientifically linked to gut, heart and brain issues. They say that the artificial sweeteners in these drinks are no better for us than sugar. Feeling inspired to cut back on your soda consumption now? When you’re trying to figure out what to replace it with, Angelone says it’s helpful to think about what it is you like about soda so much. Is it the caffeine boost? If so, a sparkling coffee or canned matcha could make a good replacement. Just be sure to eye the ingredient list to make sure it doesn’t contain

sugar or artificial sweeteners. Otherwise it defeats the point. Is it the combination of sweetness and carbonation? Sparkling water with fruit or kombucha might be your new go-to.

“Try making your own infused water and save money at the grocery store,” Angelone suggested. Cucumber and mint, blueberries and orange, and pomegranates are just a few options to try. Angelone offers up one caveat for using other caffeinated drinks (like matcha or sparkling coffee) to replace your soda habit: Don’t do it if you’re experiencing headaches, which Angelone says are not unusual to get when you quit soda — or any other drink with caffeine in it, for that matter. To avoid getting headaches, she recommends cutting back on caffeine slowly. “Since caffeine is a stimulant, you need to be careful to avoid other beverages other than sodas that can contain caffeine or similar stimulants, like matcha, green tea, chocolate and mate,” she added. (BuzzFeed)