



Diet and Regular Soft Drinks Linked to Higher Cardiovascular Risk

Drinking more than one soft drink daily — whether it's regular or diet — may be associated with an increase in risk factors for heart disease, according to a report in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*



It didn't matter whether it was a diet or regular soda that participants consumed, the association with increased risk was present, said Ramachandran Vasan, M.D. In those who drink one or more soft drinks daily, there was an association of an increased risk of developing the metabolic syndrome*. Those who consumed one or more soft drinks a day had:

- 31 percent greater risk of developing new-onset obesity
- 30 percent increased risk of developing increased waist circumference
- 25 percent increased risk of developing high blood triglycerides or high fasting blood glucose
- 32 percent higher risk of having low HDL levels

* Metabolic syndrome = a cluster of cardiovascular disease and diabetes risk factors including excess waist circumference, high blood pressure, elevated triglycerides, low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL "good" cholesterol) & high fasting glucose levels.

While the study suggests that there may be a link between soft drinks and cardiovascular risk factors, it does not show that soft drinks *cause* these risk factors. Our study was observational, and so right now all we demonstrate is an association. We have not proven causality, Vasan said. The authors mentioned that other lifestyle factors may explain the increase in risk factors.

Dhingra, R., et al (2007). Diet and Regular Soft Drinks Linked to Higher Cardiovascular Risk, *Journal of the American Heart Association*. Retrieved on July 30, 2007 from the American Heart Association Website: (<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3049074>).

Eat Right Montana, a coalition that supports and promotes healthy eating and active lifestyles, is another excellent resource for nutrition information. Go to <http://www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm> to find out more - and to sign up for their monthly newsletter.