

Question

Is it true the amount of sweeteners and sugars in carbonated soft drinks are so high that routine consumption can cause diabetes?

Answer

No, the consumption of carbonated soft drinks does not cause diabetes. Diabetes occurs when the body can no longer make or properly use insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas. Insulin allows energy from carbohydrates in foods or drinks (sugar is a carbohydrate) to be used by the body's cells.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly reviewed the scientific evidence and found no relationship between intake of carbohydrates – including the sugars in carbonated soft drinks – and type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is generally identified in children and is not preventable. Type 2 diabetes usually occurs in adults, and is often combined with obesity. Soft drinks are not included among the risk factors for type 2 diabetes, identified by the National

Institutes of Health and the American Diabetes Association. The known factors for type 2 diabetes include overweight/obesity, aging, ethnicity, family history of diabetes, low amounts of good cholesterol in the blood, previous gestational diabetes, a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits.

In 2004, the results of one study were reported by the media as proof that sugar-sweetened beverages cause obesity and type 2 diabetes. But this study only found soft drink consumption to be “associated” with weight gain and type 2 diabetes. As these authors admit, the “associations” reported are not proof that soft drinks actually cause obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Singling out any one food or beverage as the cause of diabetes is not supported by science.

Sources

- National Soft Drink Association, Statement: Study linking type 2 diabetes and weight gain in women with soft drink consumption is unconvincing and inconclusive. June 2004. <http://www.nsda.org>
- Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Report (2005), Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Agriculture. <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/report>
- Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Sciences. Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Fat, Fatty Acids, Cholesterol, Protein and Amino Acids. 2002. <http://www.iom.edu/report.asp?id=4340>
- American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org>
- American Dietetic Association. <http://www.eatright.org>