Soda, the real culprit behind obesity

by Kelly Zitterkopf

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Of all the world’s countries, the United States has the highest rate of obesity. In 2010 the CDC reported 35.7% of the adult population and 17% of the youth population as obese. The numbers don’t stop there. Each day America’s obesity rate continues to rise and the health of American citizens becomes more of a concern.

As the concern continues to rise, the government scrambles to find answers to help solve America’s weight disorder. Each year billions of gallons of soda are sold to American markets alone. Though it may be a popular choice, experts agree soda increases chances of obesity.

Some argue that it isn’t the pop at all, however, it may be the higher calorie, saturated and trans fat, lower fiber and dairy diet and sedentary lifestyle that come with the drink.

Either way, pop is only a part of the problem, not the solution. Soda is high in calories and thus sugars. Combined with its practically nonexistent nutritional value, soda causes its consumers to pack on the pounds without receiving even the smallest nutritional benefit.

Besides weight gain, studies show that phosphorus in soda can draw out the calcium in bones putting the consumer at a higher risk for diseases such as osteoporosis.

It has also been observed that regular soda drinking can increase the chances of a stroke or heart attack.

Aside from not liking the taste of soda, Scottsbluff High School senior Allison Stricker has realized the health issues related to soda drinking and has made the personal decision to refrain from pop drinking.

“I have tried it a couple times, but I never really liked the taste after seeing some of my friends from Cheyenne gain weight from drinking pop,” Stricker said. “That’s what really deterred me from drinking it.”

Besides the health concerns, many environmental issues come from soda drinking. If not recycled, aluminum cans and plastic bottles make a huge impact our landfills, oceans, and wild life.

Some people turn to diet soda as an alternative, even though diet soda has been linked to weight gain as well.

Some experts agree that diet soda is just as bad, if not worse, than regular soda. Drinking one or more diet soda per day can double one’s risk of heart attack and stroke.

It also leads to a 50 percent higher chance of developing metabolic syndrome, a condition which leads to health problems such as high blood pressure and most often, excessive fat around the waist area.

New York City has passed a bill banning the sale of any cup or bottle of sweetened drink larger than 16 fluid ounces — about the size of a medium coffee, and smaller than a common soda bottle — which will take effect March 12, 2013. This ban will only effect establishments that receive inspection grades from the health department. Convenience stores such as 7-Eleven as well as vending machines would remain exempt from the law.

With a rapidly rising obesity rate, extremes are becoming a necessity. Cities frequently copy the laws and policies of New York City, so if bans on large drinks start popping up in other major cities, it won’t come as a surprise.

America’s top 10 preferred sodas:

-1) Coca-Cola (1886)
-First soft drink in outer space
-2) Diet Coke (1983)
-Lady Gaga drinks diet coke
-3) Pepsi-Cola (1898)
-Used to be called “Brad’s Drink”
-4) Mountain Dew (1948)
-Name references moonshine
-5) Dr Pepper (1885)
-Origin of its name is unknown
-6) Sprite (1961)
-Made to compete with 7-Up
-7) Diet Pepsi (1964)
-Originally called Patio Diet Cola
-8) Diet Mountain Dew
-Was introduced in 1988
-9) Diet Dr Pepper (1963)
-Originally “Dietetic Dr. Pepper”
-10) Fanta (1941)
-Pope Benedict XVI drinks Fanta

Added sugars, usually in the form of high-fructose corn syrup
-Usually about 130 calories
-May increase your chance of developing metabolic syndrome

Both contribute to osteoporosis
-Makes drinkers gain a lot of “water weight” despite lack of calories
-While low in sugars, it is high in sodium. Both are not healthy in excess
-Contains aspartame, which can eventually turn into formaldehyde or formic acid in the body
-Over time can erode tooth enamel

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