

Benefits of Quitting Soda and Focusing on Water

It's week five of the *Water You Waiting For? Challenge*. You're almost there! One reason why many Americans don't drink enough water is because they drink sugary beverages throughout the day instead – which only dehydrates you further. While soda might taste better than plain water, sipping on this fizzy drink instead of water can have some negative health consequences.

According to a Gallup poll, 48% of surveyed Americans drink soda on a daily basis. Soda is filled with added sugars and calories – while providing no nutritional value. Drinking soda on a daily basis can increase your risk for chronic illness. In fact, drinking one to two sodas a day increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 25%.

Replacing your daily soda with a glass of water will help keep you hydrated – as well as improve your overall health and reduce your daily intake of sugar and calories. Here's what happens to your body when you quit drinking soda on a regular basis and focus on water:

Healthier heart. Research found that drinking soda can raise your blood pressure and increases the risk for heart disease in men. By cutting out soda and switching to water, you'll help maintain a healthy blood pressure and improve your heart health.

More energy. While the sugar and caffeine in a soda might give you an instant jolt of energy, it won't last long. The high sugar content of soda leads to an afternoon crash and leaves you feeling drowsy. Water has the opposite effect and will help keep you naturally energized all workday long.

Healthier teeth. Like most sugary beverages and foods, soda is terrible for your oral health. Drinking soda on a daily basis increases your risk of cavities and other oral health problems. Water, on the other hand, can help protect and clean your teeth when you drink it.

Weight loss. One of the easiest ways to reduce your calorie intake is by cutting out your liquid calories. One 12-ounce can of Pepsi, for example, contains 150 calories. The empty calories in soda can contribute to weight gain.

Healthier kidneys. Studies have shown that drinking both regular and diet soda on a regular basis can increase your risk of kidney disease. Kicking your soda habit and drinking more water will help keep your kidneys healthy.

Lower risk of chronic disease. Research has shown that drinking a lot of soda increases your risk of chronic illness, including type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. Ditching soda and replacing it with water will help lower your risk of chronic disease and increase your lifespan.

The bottom line: Kicking a soda addiction and boosting your water intake is an easy way to improve your overall health and wellbeing. If you're craving something sweet, try replacing a soda with a flavored sparkling water. You'll get all the bubbles and flavor you want without all the sugar and empty calories!

