[IMAGE]

Turn Fizz Into Fit

By Editorial Staff

Speaking of soft drinks, a review of previous studies reinforces the link between soda consumption and weight gain in adolescents. According to the researchers, soft-drink consumption has increased by 300 percent in the past 20 years, and up to 85 percent of schoolchildren drink at least one soda every day. The risk of becoming obese increases 1.6 times with each additional can or glass of sugar-sweetened drink consumed beyond normal daily intake.

A glass of soda. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark What's that all mean? Because sugar-sweetened beverages increase blood glucose and decrease insulin sensitivity, they stimulate hunger (which leads to increased caloric intake) and up the risk of developing obesity and diabetes. For example, according to one of the studies reviewed, consuming approximately one extra serving of a sugar-sweetened soft drink daily produces a 23 pound increase in body mass over 10 years.

Fortunately, there are much healthier alternatives available. More and more companies are marketing 100 percent fruit juices, which help satisfy your children's daily requirement for fruit. While most juices don't contain as many nutrients as whole fruit (which retain their skin and pulp), they're better options than sugar-laden, empty-calorie soft drinks. And of course, you can never go wrong with water.

So, do your best to keep those sodas and sugar-sweetened drinks away from your children. They'll thank you for it years from now, when they're not suffering from obesity and/or weight-related disease.

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