

The graphic would not display correctly, please see links to see the online schools graphic on soda

<http://www.onlineschools.org/blog/softdrinks/>

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2010/04/10/can-you-believe-these-statistics-on-soft-drink-use.aspx>

## Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Amazingly, according to [these statistics](#), Americans consume close to 50 billion liters of soda per year, which equates to about 216 liters, or about 57 gallons per person. That's a staggering amount of sugar! And not just any sugar, but some [of the worst we know of – fructose](#), in the form of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

Tragically, high fructose corn syrup, in the form of soda, has become the **number one** source of calories in the United States, and it is very clear that it is the primary cause of the obesity epidemic.

For example, one independent, peer-reviewed study published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* demonstrated a strong link between soda consumption and childhood obesity. They found that 12-year-olds who drank soft drinks regularly were more likely to be overweight than those who didn't.

In fact, for each additional daily serving of sugar-sweetened soft drink consumed during the nearly two-year study, the [risk of obesity jumped by 60 percent](#). Just one extra can of soda per day can [add as much as 15 pounds](#) to your weight over the course of a single year!

At that rate, it's no wonder [more than 65 percent of all American adults struggle with overweight and obesity](#).

And those who drink diet soda are just downing another type of poison, as diet drinks contain artificial sweeteners instead of caloric sweeteners. They

don't do anything to curb the obesity epidemic since diet soda is [clearly linked to obesity](#) as well, but through different mechanisms.

It's hard to decide which is worse long term, fructose or artificial sweeteners, but one thing's for sure: If you are drinking soda of any kind, you are sabotaging your health and cutting years off your lifespan.

## **How Soda Affects Your Body**

Did you know that just one can of Coke contains 10 teaspoons of sugar?!

This is 100 percent of your recommended daily intake (which is more than double my recommended daily allowance to begin with). Within 20 minutes of drinking that soda, your blood sugar spikes, and your liver responds to the resulting insulin burst by turning massive amounts of sugar into fat.

Within 40 minutes, your blood pressure rises due to your body having absorbed all the caffeine, and then your liver dumps even *more sugar* into your bloodstream.

After about one hour, you'll start to have a sugar crash, which oftentimes leads you into a vicious cycle of consuming more sugar - and caffeine-laden stimulants, followed by crashes, throughout your day.

It is a proven fact that [sugar increases your insulin levels](#), which can lead to not only weight gain, but also high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, [diabetes](#), premature aging and many more negative side effects.

In fact, sugar is so bad for your health in so many ways, I've created an entire list outlining [the ways sugar can damage your health](#).

## **How Soda Damages Your Health and Cuts Years off Your Life**

One of the more troubling health risks soda drinkers face (as if obesity isn't bad enough) is a [higher cancer risk](#). Numerous studies have pointed out the [link between sugar and increased rates of cancer](#), suggesting that regulating sugar intake is key to slowing tumor growth.

Studies have linked sugar intake with different types of cancer, such as:

- [Breast cancer](#)
- [Throat cancer](#)
- [Colon cancer](#)

Soda has even been shown to [cause DNA damage](#), courtesy of sodium benzoate, a common preservative found in many soft drinks, which has the ability to switch off vital parts of your DNA. This could eventually lead to diseases such as cirrhosis of the liver and Parkinson's.

Gout is another common health challenge that disproportionately affects soda drinkers, and this is directly related to the fructose content of soda. In fact, studies have shown that other beverages with high fructose content, such as fruit juices, and even consuming large quantities of fresh fruits can [raise your risk of gout](#).

How is this possible?

Well, first of all, please understand that it's not the fructose in and of itself that is bad. Whole fruits for example are a nutritious part of your diet when consumed in moderation.

It's the MASSIVE DOSES of fructose you're exposed to that spell trouble.

Fructose, as opposed to glucose, is particularly damaging to your body due to the way it's metabolized. The entire burden of metabolizing fructose falls

on your liver, which creates a number of waste products and toxins, including a large amount of [uric acid, which drives up blood pressure and causes gout](#).

Likewise, it's the difference in how your body responds to fructose that also makes it the leading cause of obesity.

Whereas glucose suppresses the hunger hormone ghrelin and stimulates leptin, which suppresses your appetite, fructose has no effect on ghrelin and interferes with your brain's communication with leptin. The result is overeating, weight gain and ultimately obesity.

Last but certainly not least, fructose clearly raises your insulin levels, which is at the heart of nearly every disease known to man – not just diabetes. In fact, controlling your [insulin levels](#) is one of **the most important things** you can do to optimize your overall health, and avoiding sugar, and most definitely fructose, is essential to do this.

## **What's a Healthy Level of Fructose Consumption?**

As a standard recommendation, I strongly advise **keeping your TOTAL fructose consumption below 25 grams per day**.

However, for most people it would actually be wise to limit your fruit fructose to **15 grams or less**, as it is virtually guaranteed that you will consume "hidden" sources of fructose from most beverages and just about any processed food you might eat.

Since 55 percent of HFCS is fructose, one can of soda alone would nearly exceed your daily allotment. It is easy to see that anyone who is drinking three, and certainly four, will easily exceed 100 grams of fructose per day,

This also means that you'll need to be careful with your fruit consumption. Since HFCS is added to virtually every processed, packaged food, you are

virtually guaranteed to consume hidden fructose on any given day. Even if you consumed no soda or fruit, it is very easy to exceed 25 grams of hidden fructose in your diet.

If you are a raw food advocate, have a pristine diet, and exercise very well, then you could be the exception that could exceed this limit and stay healthy. But in my experience that is far less than one in 1,000 people and probably closer to 1 in 10,000 people.

Here's a handy chart to help you keep track of your fructose consumption from fruit.

<b>Fruit</b>	<b>Serving Size</b>	<b>Grams of Fructose</b>	<b>Fruit</b>	<b>Serving Size</b>	<b>Grams of Fructose</b>
Limes	1 medium	0	Boysenberries	1 cup	4.6
Lemons	1 medium	0.6	Tangerine/mandarin orange	1 medium	4.8
Cranberries	1 cup	0.7	Nectarine	1 medium	5.4
Passion fruit	1 medium	0.9	Peach	1 medium	5.9
Prune	1 medium	1.2	Orange (navel)	1 medium	6.1
Apricot	1 medium	1.3	Papaya	1/2 medium	6.3

Guava	2 medium	2.2
Date (Deglet Noor style)	1 medium	2.6
Cantaloupe	1/8 of med. melon	2.8
Raspberries	1 cup	3.0
Clementine	1 medium	3.4
Kiwifruit	1 medium	3.4
Blackberries	1 cup	3.5
Star fruit	1 medium	3.6
Cherries, sweet	10	3.8
Strawberries	1 cup	3.8
Cherries, sour	1 cup	4.0
Pineapple	1 slice (3.5" x	4.0

Honeydew	1/8 of med. melon	6.7
Banana	1 medium	7.1
Blueberries	1 cup	7.4
Date (Medjool)	1 medium	7.7
Apple (composite)	1 medium	9.5
Persimmon	1 medium	10.6
Watermelon	1/16 med. melon	11.3
Pear	1 medium	11.8
Raisins	1/4 cup	12.3
Grapes, seedless (green or red)	1 cup	12.4
Mango	1/2 medium	16.2

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Grapefruit, pink or red	1/2 medium	4.3

Apricots, dried	1 cup	16.4
Figs, dried	1 cup	23.0

## Improving Your Health May Be as Easy as Cutting Out Soda

The good news about all these shocking health facts is that stopping the pernicious habit of drinking soda is one of the easiest things you can do.

As you can clearly see from all the examples above, you can [radically improve your health simply by cutting soda out of your diet](#). Then replace soda and other sugary drinks with clean, pure water.

Nothing beats pure water when it comes to serving your body's needs.

If you really feel the urge for a carbonated beverage, try sparkling mineral water with a squirt of lime or lemon juice.

To ensure purity, your best bet is to filter your own water at home. I strongly advise you to avoid drinking unfiltered tap water, as chlorine and [fluoride](#) (which are added to most municipal water supplies) are toxic chemicals that should not be consumed in large quantities.