

Sugary drink a day raises heart risk

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Men who drink a sugar-sweetened beverage a day have a 20 percent higher risk of heart disease than men who avoid sugary drinks, U.S. researchers say.

The study found men who drank a 12-ounce, sugar-sweetened beverage a day had a 20 percent higher risk of heart disease. However, less frequent consumption -- twice weekly and twice monthly -- didn't carry the same risk.

The findings held even after controlling for other risk factors, including smoking, physical inactivity, alcohol use and family history of heart disease, said Dr. Frank B. Hu of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston who was the study's lead author.

"This study adds to the growing evidence that sugary beverages are detrimental to cardiovascular health," Hu said in a statement. "Certainly, it provides strong justification for reducing sugary beverage consumption among patients, and more importantly, in the general population."

Hu and his colleagues arrive at their findings, published in *Circulation*, an American Heart Association journal, after studying 42,883 men in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study.

Beginning in January 1986 and every two years until December 2008, the men -- mostly white, ages 40-75 and employed in the health profession -- answered questionnaires about diet and other health habits. The study participants also provided a blood sample midway through the survey. Follow-up was 22 years later.

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