


Diet soft drink

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Diet Coke is a popular diet soft drink

Diet soft drink, or **diet soda** is the name for a [soft drink](#) that uses an [artificial sweetener](#), instead of [sugar](#). Usually, these drinks contain [carbon dioxide](#). They do not contain [alcohol](#). Sometimes, they use the word 'light' or 'lite' in the name. Because sugar has been replaced with another sweetener, they are targeted at health-conscious people, athletes, or people want to lose weight. [Diabetics](#) also use them. The sweetener tastes like sugar, but has fewer calories. The artificial sweeteners most used are [aspartame](#), [saccharin](#), [cyclamates](#), [sucralose](#), and [stevia](#). Each of them has benefits and drawbacks. The taste is often noticeably different than [sucrose](#) (regular sugar). Even after decades of research, no artificial sweetener really "tastes like" sugar.^{[1][2]} Most sweeteners have a marked aftertaste, often described as "bitter" or "metallic".^{[1][3]} The perception of this aftertaste has been studied intensively.^{[4][5]} It appears to be based on genetic factors that vary from person to person.^{[1][6]}

In recent years, consumers want more "natural" products. They are afraid of possible health effects of artificial sweeteners. These reasons have increased the demand for stevia-based sweeteners. Manufacturers were also driven to develop new [phytochemicals](#).^{[1][3]}

History

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The first diet soda was in 1952, when Kirsch Bottling in [Brooklyn, New York](#) launched a sugar free [ginger ale](#) called [No-Cal](#).^[7] It was designed for diabetics, not dieters, and distribution remained local. [Royal Crown Cola](#) placed an announcement in an [Atlanta](#) newspaper in 1958 announcing a diet soda product, [Diet Rite](#). In 1962, [Dr Pepper](#) released a diet(etic) version of its soda. It sold slowly because people thought it was meant for diabetics. In 1963, the [Coca-Cola Company](#) joined the diet soda market with [Tab](#), which was a huge success. It was originally sweetened with cyclamates and [saccharin](#).

Tab, Diet Rite, and [Fresca](#) (a grapefruit-flavored soda introduced by Coca-Cola) were the only brand-name diet sodas on the market until [Pepsi](#) released [Diet Pepsi](#) in the 1960s (initially as [Patio Diet Cola](#)). [Diet 7 Up](#) was also released in 1963 under the name **Like**. It was discontinued in 1969 due

to the US government ban of [cyclamate](#) sweetener. After reformulation, it was reintroduced as **Diet 7 Up** in 1970.^[8] It was renamed **Sugar Free 7 Up** in 1973 then back to Diet [7 Up](#) in 1979. Coca-Cola countered by releasing [Diet Coke](#) in 1982. After the release of Diet Coke, Tab took a backseat on the Coca-Cola production lines. Diet Coke could be more easily identified by consumers as associated with [Coca-Cola](#) than Tab. A study was released claiming that saccharin was a possible [carcinogen](#),. Coca-Cola's decided to decrease production of Tab. Prompted by the rising popularity of soft drinks, in the mid-1980s some of those in the [alcohol](#) industry began to follow their lead with some [beer](#) companies putting sugar-free beer on the market.

By the early 1990s, many different companies had their own diet sodas on [supermarket](#) shelves. Tab made a comeback during the late 1990s, after new studies demonstrated that saccharin is not an important factor in the risk of cancer. Nevertheless, the Coca-Cola Company has maintained its 1984 reformulation, replacing some of the saccharin in Tab with NutraSweet.

By 2002, some soda companies had diversified to include such flavors as [vanilla](#) and [lemon](#) among their products, and diet sodas were soon being produced with those flavors as well (see [Diet Vanilla Coke](#), [Diet Pepsi Vanilla](#)). By 2004, several alcohol companies had released sugar-free or "diet" alcoholic products too.^[9]

Health concerns

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There are health concerns of [sugar substitutes](#) and [caffeine](#) overuse.^{[10][11]}

Changing the food energy intake from one food will not necessarily change a person's overall food energy intake, or cause a person to lose weight. One study,^[12] suggested the opposite. Consumption of diet soda was correlated with weight gain.

An independent study by researchers with the [Framingham Heart Study](#) in Massachusetts, has turned up results which indicate that the consumption of diet soda correlates with increased [metabolic syndrome](#). 48% of the subjects were at higher risk for weight gain and elevated [blood sugar](#). Diet soda drinkers were less likely to consume healthy foods. Drinking diet soda flavored with artificial sweeteners more than likely increases cravings for sugar flavored sweets.^[13]

A preliminary abstract presented by the [University of Miami](#)'s Hannah Gardener linked daily consumption of diet soda to a 61% higher incidence of "vascular events" such as strokes and heart attacks, although Gardener acknowledged that these results could not be conclusively linked to harmful effects of diet soda itself, and may be the result of other behaviors.^[14]

Among individuals who drink several regular sodas per day, diet soda may be a better choice, according to a website on dieting.^[15] Animal studies suggest that artificial sweeteners cause body weight gain, theoretically because of a faulty insulin response, at least in cattle and rats. Rats given sweeteners have steadily increased caloric intake, increased body weight, and increased fatness.^[16] Adding saccharin to the food of calves increases their body weight as well.^[17]

Reduced-calorie soda

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In an effort to cash in on the surging popularity of [low-carbohydrate diets](#), in 2004 both [Coca-Cola](#) and [Pepsico](#) released reduced-calorie versions of their flagship sodas that contain about half the sugar of the regular version. The [Pepsi](#) variant, [Pepsi Edge](#), is sweetened with sucralose and corn syrup. The sweetening of the [Coca-Cola](#) variant, [Coca-Cola C2](#), is a combination of corn syrup, aspartame, acesulfame potassium, and sucralose. Pepsi discontinued Edge in 2005. Coca-Cola soon followed suit.

Half the sugar of a can of regular cola is still more sugar than many people on popular low-carbohydrate diets are permitted to have in a day. It is possible that these sodas are targeted, instead, at so-called "carb-conscious consumers" who are paying attention to, but not trying to drastically reduce, their carbohydrate intake.

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