**BBC**

**Sugary soft drinks linked to high blood pressure**

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**By Michelle Roberts**  
Health reporter, BBC News

**Drinking too many sugary beverages appears to raise the risk of high blood pressure, experts are warning.**

Findings suggest blood pressure goes up incrementally for every extra can of sugary drink consumed per day.

Drinking more than 355ml a day of sugar-sweetened fruit juice or carbonated drink can be enough to upset the balance, data on over 2,500 people reveals.

The study by UK and US researchers appears in the journal Hypertension.

The precise mechanism behind the link is unclear, but scientists believe too much sugar in the blood disrupts blood vessel tone and salt levels in the body.

Non-sugar sweetened diet drinks did not carry the same risk.

The soft drink industry maintains that the beverages are safe to drink "in moderation".

The American Heart Association says people should drink no more than three 355ml cans of soda a week.

For the study, the participants who were aged 40-59 from the UK and the US were asked to record what they had eaten in the preceding 24 hours on four separate occasions.

They also provided a urine sample and had their blood pressure measured.

The researchers found that sugar intake was highest in those consuming more than one sugar-sweetened beverage daily.

They also found that individuals consuming more than one serving per day of sugar-sweetened beverages consumed more calories than those who didn't consume sugary drinks - around 397 extra calories a day.

For every extra can of sugary drink consumed per day, participants on average had a higher systolic blood pressure by 1.6mmHg and a higher diastolic blood pressure by 0.8mmHg.

Overall, the people who consumed a lot of sugar-sweetened beverages appeared to also have less healthy diets and were more likely to be overweight.

But regardless of this, the link with blood pressure was still significant even after adjusting for factors such as weight and height.

**Stroke risk**

Professor Paul Elliott, senior author of the study, from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, said: "It's widely known that if you have too much salt in your diet, you're more likely to develop high blood pressure.

"The results of this study suggest that people should be careful about how much sugar they consume as well."

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Someone with a blood pressure level of 135mmHg over 85mmHg is twice as likely to have a heart attack or stroke as someone with a reading of 115mmHg over 75mmHg.

In the study, the link between sugary drinks and higher blood pressure was especially strong in people who consumed a lot of salt as well as sugar.

Excess salt in the diet is already a known to contribute to high blood pressure.

The British Heart Foundation said more research was now needed to better understand the relationship between sugar and blood pressure.

Victoria Taylor, Senior Dietician at the BHF, said it was best to avoid too many sugary drinks because they add extra calories to our diets that can lead to obesity, a major risk factor for heart disease.

Professor Graham MacGregor, chairman of the Blood Pressure Association said: "This is another nail in the coffin for soft drinks.

"Not only do they make you obese but they may also put up your blood pressure. Drinking sweet soft drinks is not good news."

A spokesman for the British Soft Drinks Association said the study did not establish that drinking sugar-sweetened beverages in any way causes hypertension.

"Soft drinks are safe to drink but, like all food and drink, should be consumed in moderation as part of a balanced diet," he said.

**MAIL ONLINE**

**Fizzy drinks pose heart risk by 'raising blood pressure'**

By [Jenny Hope](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=y&authornamef=Jenny+Hope)

**Date = 08:53, 1 March 2011**

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Fizzy drinks and other cans of sugary drink push up blood pressure rates, say British researchers.

Drinking five cans a day could result in someone moving from healthy levels into the high blood pressure zone, they claim.

The 'striking' new findings from a study of over 2,500 people suggest any drink with added sugar or caloric sweeteners adversely affects blood pressure.

For every extra can of sugary drink consumed a day, systolic blood pressure went up by 1.6 mmHg and diastolic blood pressure by 0.8 mmHg.

High blood pressure reading is classified as more than140/90 millimetres of mercury.

The first figure, the systolic pressure, corresponds to the 'surge' that occurs with each heart beat while the diastolic reading is the pressure in the 'resting' stage between beats.

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Researchers are not clear about why sugary drinks appear to push up blood pressure.

But they may raise uric acid which in turn raises blood pressure by reducing the levels of nitric oxide, a chemical that relaxes the lining of the blood vessels.

The link between sugary drinks and higher blood pressure was especially strong in people who consumed a lot of salt as well as sugar.

There was some 'weak' evidence that diet drinks were linked with lower blood pressure levels, but it was not a consistent finding, says a report in the medical journal Hypertension.

Professor Paul Elliott, senior author of the study, from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, said 'It's widely known that if you have too much salt in your diet, you're more likely to develop high blood pressure.

'The results of this study suggest that people should be careful about how much sugar they consume as well.'

The researchers analysed data from 2,696 volunteers aged between 40 and 59, in eight areas of the US and two areas of the UK.

On four separate occasions over a period of three weeks on average, the participants reported what they had eaten in the preceding 24 hours, as well as giving urine samples and having their blood pressure measured.

 The findings applied to any sugar-sweetened drinks, fizzy or still, fruit drinks and lemonade, and drinks with added caloric sweeteners.

Fruit juices which were 100 per cent fruit were excluded.

For every extra can of sugary drink consumed a day, systolic blood pressure went up by 1.6 mmHg and diastolic blood pressure by 0.8 mmHg.

The researchers also found people who drink more sugary drinks had more unhealthy diets and were heavier than non-consumers.

Those consuming more than one sugar-sweetened beverage a day ate almost 400 more calories a day on average.

But even after taking into account the effect of extra bodyweight on blood pressure, there was still a significant link with sweetened drinks.

Researcher Dr Ian Brown, also from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, said previous research showed people who reduced their intake of sugary drinks over 18 months had a fall in their blood pressure.

He said 'These are striking findings and the implication is that if you drink five cans a day - and some people do - it could push you from having a normal blood pressure into having high blood pressure.

'This is a population study. It can't say definitively that sugary drinks raise your blood pressure, but it's one piece of the evidence in a jigsaw puzzle.

'In the meantime, we would advise people who want to drink sugar-sweetened beverages should do so only in moderation.'

Professor Graham MacGregor, chairman of UK charity the Blood Pressure Association, said 'Sweetened soft drinks are a source of hidden calories and may play a role in rising obesity in children, and could be pushing up blood pressure in adults.

'It's the final nail in the coffin for these drinks.'

Victoria Taylor, Senior Dietitian at the British Heart Foundation, said 'This research doesn’t show us why there might be a link between sugary drinks and high blood pressure so there needs to be some more time spent answering that question.

'We may know then how much is too much when it comes to these types of drinks.

'Aside from blood pressure, we do know sugary drinks will add extra calories to our diets and excess calories can lead to obesity, a major risk factor for heart disease.

'If you’re watching your waistline, opt for sugar-free choices like water as your main drink, instead of sugary beverages.'

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1361721/Fizzy-drinks-pose-heart-risk-pushing-blood-pressure.html#ixzz23imfSa7B>

The Daily Telegraph (London)

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**The more sugary drinks a day, the higher your blood pressure**

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Fizzy **drinks** and sugar-rich fruit juices increase **blood pressure**, say scientists.

Researchers who tested 2,700 people, aged 40 to 59, found that their **blood pressure** increased in line with how many **drinks** containing glucose and fructose they had each day, irrespective of their build.

Combining sugary **drinks** with a high salt diet put participants at even greater risk, said the team from **Imperial** **College,** London.

The researchers also found that "diet" fizzy **drinks** had no effect on **blood pressure** levels because those who opted for such **drinks** were more likely to be overweight and not exercise.

Dr Ian Brown, of **Imperial** **College,** said: "People who **drink** a lot of sugar-sweetened beverages appear to have less healthy diets.

"These findings lend support for recommendations to reduce the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages, as well as added sugars and sodium, in an effort to reduce **blood pressure** and improve cardiovascular health."

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