

## Have Your Helped Your Heart Today?

### **THE "ONE-A-DAY" THAT CAN LEAD TO OBESITY, DIABETES** **Soda packs on pounds, increases chance of Type 2 diabetes, says two Harvard Studies**

Just one can of soda a day can pile on as much as 15 pounds in a single year-and evidence suggests this is a key reason that more people have gained weight, Harvard researchers said in a study published August 9. In a separate study another Harvard researcher drew a link between soda consumption and Type 2 diabetes in women.

Harvard School of Public Health researchers looked at nutrition studies over the last 40 years and found that a person can gain as much as 15 pounds in a single year. "We tried to look at the big picture rather than individual studies," said Dr. Frank Hu, who led a Harvard team publishing their report on soda's link to obesity in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition ([www.ajcn.org](http://www.ajcn.org)).

Each soda consumed contains the equivalent of 9 to 10 teaspoons of table sugar. Diet sodas were not included in the study.

Women in a separate study who drank at least one sugar-sweetened soda a day were 85% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who drank less, said Matthias B. Schulze, presenting his Harvard School of Public Health findings at the American Diabetes Association's 64th scientific sessions. In addition to the sodas' excess calories, their large amount of rapidly absorbable sugars can contribute to obesity and an elevated risk of diabetes, said Schulze.

Soft drink manufacturers have discounted these results. "Blaming one specific product or ingredient as the root cause of obesity defies common sense. Instead, there are many contributing factors, including regular physical activity," said an American Beverage Association spokesman in response to the first study.

However Dr. David Ludwig, director of the obesity program at Children's Hospital in Boston, said pointing the blame elsewhere misses the point. "Could you imagine somebody saying we should ignore the contribution of hypertension to heart attack because there are many causes? It's ludicrous. Yet this argument resurfaces with regard to obesity," he said.

One-third of all carbohydrate calories in our American diet come from added sweeteners, and beverages (including sodas) account for about half this amount.