

Sugar and Your Heart

Are you endangering your heart?

A recent study indicates that not only can added sugar play a key role in heart disease, but that many Americans are consuming more sugar than is safe. This information comes from a comprehensive report that involved data from national health surveys and death rates. Scientists took that data and examined health patterns for over 30,000 American adults. Their findings? High sugar intake appears to be linked to heart problems.

According to the article, "Sugar Tied to Fatal Heart Woes," "As sugar intake increased, risks climbed steeply. Adults who got at least 25 percent of their calories from added sugar were almost three times more likely to die of heart problems than those who consumed the least [10% or less]."

Although added sugar is also linked to rising obesity rates, the researchers in this study did not find that the connection between high sugar intake and heart problems came about solely through obesity. That's because even people of a normal weight who consumed too much sugar were likely to have heart trouble. It turns out that added sugar is really bad for your heart. It raises your bad cholesterol levels, triglycerides, and blood pressure (a disaster trifecta). Added sugars also might increase the types of inflammations that are linked to heart trouble.

So, how much is too much?

Not a lot, as it turns out. People who had as little as 15% of their daily calories from added sugars were 20% more likely to have heart problems than people who had less than 10% of their daily calories from added sugar. Most Americans get more than 10% of their daily calories from sugar, and 10% of all Americans make added sugars at least 25% or more of all the calories they consume in a day.

Reduce your risk of heart disease by limiting added sugar to no more than 10% of your daily calories. Since sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugar in the American diet, do your best to cut down your consumption of those drinks, replacing them with unsweetened tea, water, or seltzer. Be aware of the sugar content of the processed foods you buy. Even things that don't taste sweet, like ketchup or salad dressing, may actually be loaded with added sugar.



The bottom line? Be kind to your heart. Reduce your sugar intake.

References:

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