



## How even ONE can of Coke a day can increase the risk of heart failure by 20%

- Study of 42,000 middle-aged men found two 200ml soft drinks each day was enough to increase the chance of heart failure by 23 per cent
- Adds weight to calls for an introduction of a sugar tax on fizzy drinks

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Drinking just over one can of sugary drink a day dramatically increases the risk of heart problems, researchers have warned.

A study of 42,000 middle-aged men found that two 200ml soft drinks each day was enough to increase the chance of heart failure by 23 per cent.

The research included fizzy drinks, sweetened fruit squash and other drinks with added sugar or artificial sweeteners, but did not include natural fruit juice.

The study fuels growing concerns that sugar is contributing to a number of health problems.

The UK Government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition warned this summer that adults halve their sugar intake to consume no more than 30g of sugar a day - just seven teaspoons.

That is less than that in single 330ml can of Coca-Cola, which contains 35g.

Experts have previously linked sweetened drinks to changes in blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.

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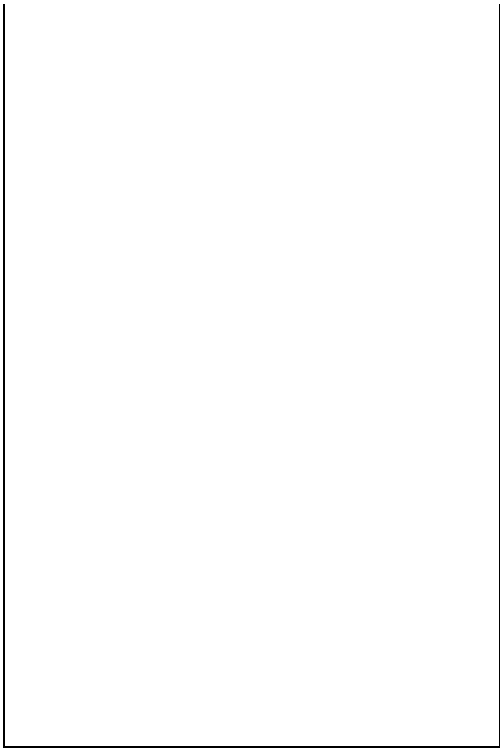
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But the Swedish researchers, writing in the medical journal Heart, said this was the first time a link has been made with heart failure.

Heart failure is caused by the heart failing to pump enough blood around the body, usually after a heart attack.

In its severest form heart failure has a life expectancy worse than many cancers.

The research team asked 42,400 men, each aged between 45 and 79 when they started the study, about the food and drink they regularly consumed.

**The UK Government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition warned adults to consume no more than 30g of sugar a day - less than that in single 330ml can of Coca-Cola, which contains 35g**

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The men were then tracked over a period of 12 years.

During that time, 3,604 new cases of heart failure were diagnosed and 509 people died of their condition.

After taking into account factors that may influence the results, two servings of sweetened drinks was associated with a 23 per cent increased risk of developing heart failure, compared with drinking none at all.

The researchers, including from the respected Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, wrote: 'Our study findings suggest that sweetened beverage consumption could contribute to heart failure development.'



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**Men who have just two sweet drinks a day put themselves at risk of serious heart problems, researchers say**

'These findings could have implications for heart failure prevention strategies.'

They stressed that the study only involved older white men and may not be applicable to younger age groups, women, or certain ethnic groups.

Experts last night welcomed the study, but cautioned that people who drink a lot of sweetened drinks often have a poor diet overall, which may explain the link.

But Spanish professors Miguel Martinez-Gonzalez and Miguel Ruiz-Canela, writing a linked commentary in the Heart journal, added: 'The well-known association of sweetened beverages with obesity and Type 2 diabetes, which are risk factors for heart failure, reinforces the biological plausibility of the findings.'

'Based on their results, the best message for a preventive strategy would be to recommend an occasional consumption of sweetened beverages or to avoid them altogether.'

The study adds weight to increasing calls for the Government to introduce a sugar tax on fizzy drinks, a campaign backed by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, the British Medical Association, and several of the Royal medical colleges.

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after party

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Professor Francesco Cappuccio, of the University of Warwick, said last night: 'The results of this study are not surprising for those who work in the areas of global burden of disease and action plans to prevent cardiovascular disease globally.'

'High sugary drinks can contribute to heart failure by increasing weight gain and diabetes.'

'Recent suggestions to include a 20 per cent sugar tax on sweetened drinks should be considered seriously, not only to reduce the incidence of obesity but to reduce the overall burden of cardiovascular disease by other mechanisms.'

Gavin Partington, director general of the British Soft Drinks Association, said: 'The authors of this limited observational study accept that no definitive conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect.'

'Key risk factors for heart failure include high blood pressure which is a consequence of an overall unhealthy diet and lack of exercise.'

'The persistent focus on a single ingredient or product is neither helpful to consumers nor based on evidence of the importance of a balanced diet overall.'

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