



Wellness News Network™

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Soda - Death in a Can?

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Introduction

Soft drinks, and soda especially, have no nutritional content and overtime will actually contribute to illnesses such as diabetes, osteopenia, osteoporosis, reflux, stomach ulcers, duodenal ulcers, pancreatitis, pancreatic cancer and pseudo-multiple sclerosis. In addition, the consumption of one 8 oz can of soda a day adds 5 lbs of weight a year to the average North American, contributing to their obesity and to the cardiovascular issues that obesity causes. Obesity also contributes to osteoarthritis of knees and hips so soda consumption may indirectly impact joint health too!



Ultimately most of us are aware that soda is not good for us and yet the average North American consumes not one 8 oz soda a day but two sodas! It's time for us to realize that soda is not only bad for us, but that it is equally as detrimental to our health as smoking cigarettes and that soda consumption may actually cause MORE health issues than cigarettes do.

Consumer Reports¹ has released some shocking information about dark sodas in particular. On January 24th, 2014, Consumer Reports released a report on the caramel color used in dark sodas, 4-methylimidazole (4-Mel) This ammonia based caramel color, which is not derived from caramel at all, is a known carcinogen, and is permitted to be used in foods and beverages by the FDA to give them a brown color. Under California law, any beverage or food with more than 29 micrograms of 4-Mel in it, should carry a health warning label (as cigarettes must do). In a recent Consumer Report test, 12 oz of Pepsi One (193.5 micrograms) and Malta Goya (352.5 micrograms) vastly exceeded these levels and had no health warning label. The California Attorney General has been asked to investigate.

QUESTION:

One can of soda per day can add how much to your weight per year?

- A) 3 lbs
- B) 4 lbs
- C) 5 lbs

ANSWER:

- C) 5 lbs

TRUE OR FALSE:

4-Mel (4-methylimidazole) is the most common caramel food coloring used today

ANSWER:

True

Question:

Drinking too much soda can lead to what diseases?

- A) Obesity
- B) Hypothyroidism
- C) Reflux
- D) All of the above

ANSWER:

- A) Obesity and C) Reflux

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The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment used 29 micrograms as the cut off point because they believe that to be the level that would cause one in 100,000 people to develop cancer (consuming 29 micrograms of 4-Mel a day.) *If one Pepsi One has more than this level and you are consuming other foods colored with this product (it is the most commonly used food coloring used today) then what is the real risk for developing cancer in your lifetime?*

Knowing that most people drink two soft drinks a day, in addition to consuming foods with 4-Mel, Consumer Reports is asking why is the coloring even necessary for human consumption? Their experts go so far as to suggest that 3 micrograms or less per can should be the maximum allowed if this coloring is going to continue to be allowed by the FDA.

In addition, there is no hard and fast quality control for the amount of 4-Mel used in soda. While Consumer Reports' initial testing showed Pepsi One and Malta Goya had levels of 4-Mel that were higher than 29 micrograms, the New York area samples of the same brands tested much higher. In a second test however, the levels in the New York samples had come down although regular Pepsi from the New York area averaged 174 micrograms in the first test and 32 micrograms in the second which would both exceed the California guidelines for safe consumption.

After Consumer Reports informed PepsiCo of our test results, the company issued a statement that said that Proposition 65 is based on per day exposure and not exposure

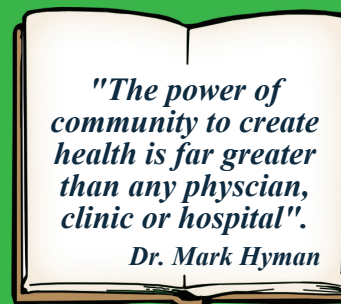
per can. It cited a government consumption data that stated the average amount of diet soda consumed by people is less than a third of a 12-ounce can. For that reason, they believe that Pepsi One does not require cancer-risk warning labels - even if the amount of 4-Mel in a single can exceeds 29 micrograms. Consumer Reports says there is analysis of government data that shows higher levels of daily consumption of soft drinks generally (two per day).

Based on their results, Consumer Reports is alerting the California Attorney General's office of their test findings regarding Pepsi One and Malta Goya while petitioning the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to set a federal standard for 4-Mel and to require manufacturers to list the type of caramel color they use on their products' ingredient lists. That is important because there are four types of caramel coloring. Only the two made with ammonia compounds can contain 4-Mel. However, manufacturers can use the general term "artificial color" interchangeably with "caramel color."

The FDA said it does not believe that 4-Mel from caramel color at levels currently in food pose a risk although they are currently doing their own tests of foods, including sodas, for 4-Mel. They are also reviewing new safety data on 4-Mel to determine what, if any, regulatory action needs to be taken.

Thirsty? Water is great! Want flavor? Think twice about soda. Coffee, tea and juice are all healthier and, apparently with some soft drinks, safer alternatives.

Quote to Inspire



References and Sources:

1. <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2014/01/regulations-need-ed-against-risky-caramel-coloring-in-foods/index.htm>

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