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advisors

5 Things That Happen When You Finally Stop Drinking Diet Soda



Migraines disappear and focus sharpens

It turns out the headaches you expected from a diet soda withdrawal didn't materialize. You probably find yourself thinking clearly for the first time in a while. That's because the chemicals that make up the artificial sweetener ASPARTAME may have altered brain chemicals, nerve signal, and brain's reward system, which lead to headaches, and insomnia.

A 2013 animal study found that rats that drank diet soda had damaged cells and nerve endings in the cerebellum – the part of the brain responsible for motor skills.

Taste buds are more sensitive

It's not your imagination: without your usual diet soda chaser, you may find that food has more flavor. It has subtlety. It's more enjoyable. That's because the artificial sweeteners in your diet soda overwhelmed your taste buds with an onslaught of sweetness. ASPARTAME ranks 200 hundred times sweeter than table sugar. Splenda? 600 times! In fact, brain scans show that diet soda alters sweet receptors in the brain and prolong sugar cravings rather than satisfies them. "

"Rather than needing sugary treats or something really salty like pretzels and chips, they reach for an apple and a piece of cheese. And, when they try diet soda again, they find it intolerably sweet." Says Heather Bainbridge, RD from Columbia University Medical Center Weight Control Center.

The Scale finally goes the right way

While you may have started drinking diet soda to facilitate weight loss, quitting it may do the trick. A recent 9-year study found older adults who drank diet soda continued to pack on belly fat. The study piggybacks on research that found each daily diet soda increases your chance of becoming obese in the next decade by 65% and a study published by *Diabetes Care* that found that drinking diet soft drinks daily was associated with an increase in metabolic syndrome – obesity, high blood-pressure, high triglycerides – which leads to heart disease and diabetes.

Your attitude toward food changes

Since diet sodas have no calories, people drinking them often feel it's okay to indulge elsewhere. Soda often accompanies unhealthy foods. "Sometimes those poor choices built up habits," she says "You're conditioned to have soda with chips, fries, or something sweet. When we eliminate the soft drinks, you also break the junk food habit."

Kidney function Improves

Now that your body no longer must make sense of the unpronounceable ingredients in diet soda, your kidneys can get back to clearing toxins, stabilizing blood pressure, and absorbing minerals. One study looked at 11 years of data and found that women who drank two or more servings of diet soda doubled their chances of declining kidney functions.