

COKE – SOFT DRINKS! WHY WOULD THIS POISON NOT BE HARAAM?

Written by Administrator

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By M. Alireza

This is a subject that has been on my mind for sometime, but what delayed me to tackle it is the lack or little research on these empty-nutrient and damaging-to-health soda and cola beverages, whether they contain added sugar or sugar substitutes. What is sad is that millions of unaware people not only drink them casually, but also take them in shocking quantities. Most of the heavy drinkers are unconsciously addicted to them. They need to take them in the morning, with meals, in between meals and at every opportunity. They have come to substitute even water.

In the US, young mothers not only drink them excessively, but also bottle-feed their babies and toddlers coke or other soda drinks. I have read about mothers-to-be who gorge themselves with such "offensive" beverages. Children, teenagers and adults around the world and unfortunately in this country too, guzzle down a supersized glass in one shot and order refills in one sitting.

The debate about soda drinks is very much alive, but who can stand in the way of the giant beverage industry, especially if they are supported by the silent consent of government health agencies. If it were not for some dedicated scientists', researchers', health seekers' and activists' proactive and outspoken work and movements, we would never have heard of the downside of such "artificial," harmful and nutrient-empty drinks.

Because more and more research and studies are surfacing and disclosing the damaging effects of soda drinks, I finally decided to explore this "hot" subject. My intention is to create awareness among children, adolescents, parents, adults and schools who are under the impression that such beverages are inoffensive. I, for one, was a coke drinker in my early adolescent years. My ignorance, at that time, led me to feel cool to drink it, but then I started noticing unusual reactions in other kids when they drank more than one bottle of Coke or Pepsi. They would go wild, hyper or haywire and some got hooked on it. I could not figure out why, but my instinct told me that it was not the right thing to drink and I did not want to become a "slave" to anything. Little did I know that it was due to the huge amounts of sugar and caffeine in those little bottles. I decided to quit it cold turkey when I was 15 and I never put a drop of the liquid in my mouth since then. No regrets!!!

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Coincidentally some months after that, I visited a dentist who sincerely advised me NOT to drink colas or smoke tobacco. He said they are corrosive, staining and damaging to teeth. He said he could tell a coke drinker from a non-drinker. His advice reinforced my resolution and from then on; I knew that I had made the right decision when I quit soda drinks.

Unfortunately, nobody listened to me then, but years later I applied the restriction on my own immediate family. I banned all coke and soda drinks from my house; hence my children were raised cola-free (maybe one or two bottle out of temptation or peer pressure). My guests were also denied such beverages in my house. I offered them fresh juices instead. With this said, I will begin to reveal to you the different ingredients that makes soda drinks harmful to health and mood.

Colas are beverages, which seem inoffensive, yet they are harmful and also devoid of nutrients or anything good. They contain excessive quantities of simple sugar (9 to 12 sugar cubes per container) or even worse artificial sweeteners (aspartame, sucralose, saccharin). The sugar exceeds the recommended daily allowance. The huge amounts of caffeine, sugar, high fructose corn syrup and additives (synthetic colorings, flavors, or preservatives) make adults overly stimulated and children overactive and disturb mood and sleep. Let us see what happens to the body when one can of cola goes into the system.

When a large amount of sugar is suddenly dumped into the stomach, messages are sent to the pancreas to release adequate quantities of insulin, the hormone that metabolizes sugar and gets it absorbed into the bloodstream in order to distribute it to cells, brain and tissue. More insulin is pumped into the bloodstream, attempting to make use of the swimming sugar. Once the insulin is released, it metabolizes sugar very rapidly, leaving the body suddenly low in sugar and weak. The limbs start to shake and the heart to beat rapidly. Because the body demands more sugar, the victim goes for another bottle of soda. More sugar puts the body in turmoil i.e. stress. It becomes a vicious circle.

The above condition, which is called hyperglycaemia, is very stressful on all the systems, especially the glandular system and pancreas, depleting the adrenal glands, stress hormones and insulin. Too much insulin triggers the release of cortisol, the stress hormone. When both are left roaming in the body, they damage health and make the victim eventually gain weight and feel depleted.

With obesity, the cells become engorged with fat, so they close their insulin receptors, stopping the hormone from entering them; hence they become insulin resistant and blood sugar remains roaming in the bloodstream. The excess sugar converts to fat and the victim starts gaining weight or becoming obese with a concentration of fat around the waist, conditions, which lead to diabetes type 2 and metabolic syndromes.

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At the same time, the immune system also becomes compromised and weakened and the body depleted of nutrients, making the individual receptive to fungal infections, pathogens and metabolic disorders (diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular and heart diseases). According to a study, high amounts of sugar also depress white blood cell count for several hours after consumption, weakening the defenses against bacterial and viral infections. Eventually, kidney problems, tooth decay and even cancer start emerging. Studies have shown that rats on a high sugar diet were more prone to breast cancer than their counterparts on normal diets. Sugar and carbonated drinks also rob the bones of calcium, resulting in bone loss and eventually osteoporosis.

This is only an introduction of the harm and pain resulting from excessive and long-term intake of these beverages. Each ingredient in cola, soda and soft drinks leaves its own damaging mark on the body, organs, or systems in different ways. Now, I shall leave you to imagine the amount of injury they inflict on you and your children collectively. There is much more information from recent research on the subject that deserves elaboration in order to enlighten the unaware consume especially when such beverages are approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Saudi FDA and other health organizations.