

Sugar Increases Risk of Heart Disease

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DENVER — The word has gotten out that heart-conscious eaters need to be mindful of calories, sodium and fat. Less well known is that mounting evidence indicates that excess sugar can also lead to heart disease. National Jewish Health cardiologist Brett Fenster, MD, says high sugar intake is the most under-recognized risk factor among patients.

“We often associate sugar with obesity and diabetes, but now we also need to monitor sugar intake due to heart-health concerns,” said Dr. Fenster. “We’re learning that soda and other drinks and foods with high sugar levels can raise cholesterol levels in the blood.”

Sugar, corn syrup, and high-fructose corn syrup are the most commonly used and widely recognized sugars added to food.

The CDC recently found that adults whose diets contained the most added sugar also had the highest levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or bad cholesterol and the lowest levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or good cholesterol.

“The recommendation is that no more than 100 daily calories come from sugar. One regular Coke or Pepsi and there’s your 100 calories,” said Dr. Fenster. “If you love your soda, I’d look at switching to the diet version.” Dr. Fenster also recommends using non-sugar based sweeteners and flavoring food with other seasonings. “Something simple can be even taking recipes and cutting the sugar in half. A lot of times you can do that without changing the taste too much,” said Dr. Fenster.

A [recent study by Emory University](#) showed adolescents who get excess sugar are more likely to develop heart issues as adults. They found those with higher sugar intake had 9 percent higher LDL and 10 percent higher triglyceride levels than teens with the lowest sugar intake.

National Jewish Health is known worldwide for treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders, and for groundbreaking medical research. Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to these disorders. Since 1998, U.S. News & World Report has ranked National Jewish the #1 respiratory hospital in the nation.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 122 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

William Allstetter
303.398.1002
allstetterw@njhealth.org

Adam Dormuth
303.398.1082
dormutha@njhealth.org