

Sugary beverages tied to increased visceral fat

By: [SHANNON AYMES, Clinical Endocrinology News Digital Network](#)

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VITALS

Key clinical point: Daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages was associated with a 27% increase in visceral adipose tissue.

Major finding: More sugar-sweetened beverage consumption was associated with greater change in VAT volume which was significant after accounting for the change in body weight (P less than .001).

Data source: A prospective study of participants in the third-generation cohort of the Framingham Heart Study.

Disclosures: The authors report having no disclosures. The study was funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages was associated with a 27% increase in visceral adipose tissue over time, according to an analysis of the Framingham Heart Study published online on Jan. 11 in *Circulation*.

“There is evidence linking sugar-sweetened beverages with cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Our message to consumers is to follow the current dietary guidelines and to be mindful of how much sugar-sweetened beverages they drink. To policy makers, this study adds another piece of evidence to the growing body of research suggesting sugar-sweetened beverages may be harmful to our health,” [Dr. Caroline Fox](#) of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s Framingham Heart Study and Population Sciences Branch said in a press release.



American Heart Association



These results coincide with the recent release of the updated dietary [guidelines](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which note to limit added sugars to less than 10% of daily caloric intake.

Furthermore, sugar-sweetened beverages are a major contributor of additional sugar in the American diet. According to the study, cardiometabolic risk can potentially be associated with an increase in abdominal adipose tissue. Likewise, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease have been linked to larger amounts of visceral adipose tissue (VAT).

Dr. Fox and her colleagues conducted a prospective study of participants in the third generation cohort of the Framingham Heart Study to explore the relationship between sugar-sweetened beverage intake vs. diet soda and differences over time in VAT and subcutaneous adipose tissue (SAT) on CT scans. Measurements of the quantity and quality of abdominal adipose tissue were obtained from two CT scans taken roughly 6 years apart. Participants were assessed for frequency of sugar-sweetened beverage vs. diet soda intake, and body measurements were obtained.

The mean age of the 1,003 participants was 45.3 years, and women made up 45%. Of them, 85% (852) reported drinking a combination of diet soda and sugar-sweetened beverages and 14% (138) reported not drinking either. Sugar-sweetened beverage intake was reported as daily, frequent, occasional, or not at all, in 13%, 35%, 20%, and

32% of the participants, respectively. Those consuming sugar-sweetened beverages were less likely to have diabetes but more likely to be young, male, report more physical activity, and smoke.

Interestingly, those reporting diet soda intake had a higher prevalence of diabetes, had an increased body mass index, and reported less activity ([Circulation. 2016 Jan 11](#)). Over the 6 years, they found more sugar-sweetened beverage consumption was associated with greater change in VAT volume, which was significant after accounting for the change in body weight (P less than .001). As the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages increased from no consumption to daily consumption, the VAT volume increased by 658 cm³, 649 cm³, 707 cm³, and 852 cm³, respectively.

Finally, they found no association with diet soda intake and change in weight or change in VAT volume.

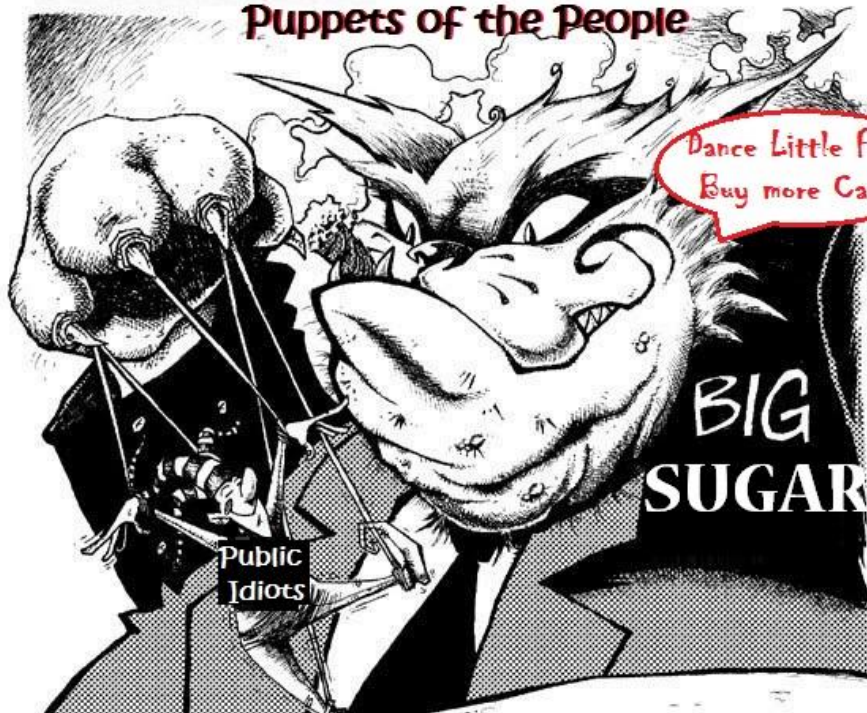
“In this prospective observational study of middle-aged adults, we observed that individuals who consumed at least one serving of sugar-sweetened beverages per day ... had a 27% greater increase in VAT volume over 6 years compared to non-consumers,” the investigators wrote.

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