6 Ways to Quit Soda

The flavor. The sweetness. The fizz. Every day, nearly one in five Americans cracks open a can or pours a cup in search of a soda fix. The allure of soda pop can seem so strong that many people have a hard time giving it up.

This love of sugary, carbonated beverages comes at a price. Each slurp boosts your risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic health conditions. One study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that soda speeds cell aging, which can increase your risk for some cancers, as well as heart disease and diabetes.

To step away from soda for good, try these strategies:

1. **Make a smart swap.** Replacing just one sweetened soda per day with water, plain tea or unsweetened coffee can reduce your risk for diabetes by up to one-fourth. Find water boring? Try it sparkling, with a twist of lemon or lime, or flavored with an herb like mint.

2. **Remember why.** Consider the health benefits you'll get from cutting back. Each time you find yourself weakening, think about your bigger goals—a smaller waistline, a healthier heart, a longer life.

3. **Put it off.** Tell yourself you'll just wait 20 minutes. By then, your urge to gulp may pass.

4. **Move your body.** Go for a walk, or exercise in short bursts— try a few pushups or lunges. Physical activity can boost your mood, fight stress and take your mind off your longings.

5. **Seek support.** Find a buddy who also wants to kick the soda habit. Or tell someone you know and trust about your goals. Call this person for encouraging words when you need a boost.

6. **Keep a journal.** Note the times and places your cravings crop up. Certain situations may trigger your desire—say, lunch in the break room or a midafternoon slump. Noticing these patterns can help you prepare to deal with them in the future.

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