



Is Carbonated Water a Healthy Choice?

We know that sodas have a variety of negative effects on our health so many people are turning to carbonated (sparkling) water as a bubbly alternative. But is it as healthy as still water?

First, not all carbonated water drinks are created equal, so it is important to look at the ingredient list and food label before buying. Some brands of flavored sparkling water can include caffeine, citric acid and added sugars. Choose one that has no added sugar. It's probably best to avoid those with artificial sweetener as well since some research suggests they may have some negative health effects too.

Is there any truth to concerns that sparkling water isn't as hydrating as still water or can negatively impact your bone density and cause tooth decay?

Does carbonated water hydrate as well as still water?

Yes, carbonated water appears to be equally hydrating compared to regular water. In one study, participants were asked to drink either a liter of regular water, sparkling water or some other beverage like milk, juice, soda or a sports drink. After four hours, researchers measured participants' urine output and found there was no difference in the hydration status of those who drank carbonated water versus still water. For those of us that don't like regular water, sparkling water is a great alternative and can actually encourage us to drink more and stay better hydrated.

Does carbonated water affect bone density?

While research has found an association between cola consumption and lower bone density, this is not the case for carbonated water. The link between cola and bone density may be due to its phosphoric acid (phosphorus) content which may hinder calcium absorption or its caffeine content which may increase calcium excretion. The link may also be due to a reduced consumption of calcium containing beverages, like milk, in people that drink a lot of colas. Carbonated water is both phosphorous and caffeine free and is not associated with decreases in bone density. If carbonated water takes the place of calcium containing beverages in your diet, be sure to get enough calcium through other dietary sources.

Does carbonated water lead to tooth decay?

Adding carbon dioxide to water creates small amounts of carbonic acid, making the water slightly more acidic. However, when researchers soaked human teeth in various still and sparkling waters, they found that neither were harmful to the teeth.

However, fruit-flavored sparkling water is significantly more acidic and could contribute to dental erosion, but the effect is thought to be very low. The high acidity and sugar content of sugar-sweetened sodas, like Coke and Pepsi, will definitely erode tooth enamel. In fact, one study found that soft drinks are 100 times more corrosive than any sparkling water.

While drinking soda has been associated with negative effects, carbonation is not harmful in and of itself. Drinking carbonated water offers the same benefits as drinking plain water. So, feel free to drink carbonated water if you're looking for some fizz.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/does-carbonated-water-harm-bones>

<https://rightasrain.uwmedicine.org/body/food/sparkling-water>

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