

Why fizzy drinks (and even sparkling water) are WORSE than you thought

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We're drinking more soft drinks than ever before - on average, 25 gallons each a year. But what is it doing to our health? Last week, U.S. researchers suggested that girls who frequently had fizzy drinks were more likely to start puberty early. And it's not just sugary drinks - diet versions, even sparkling water, can have an effect on health, as ANGELA EPSTEIN reports...

They attack your teeth

Sugar reacts with the bacteria in plaque (the sticky coating on your teeth) and produces harmful acids that can cause decay, making sugary fruit juices a threat to oral health.

But fizzy drinks may cause even greater damage. A study by the University of Birmingham found that full-sugar cola is ten times as corrosive as fruit juices in the first three minutes of drinking, even though they contain similar amounts of sugar.

It's thought citric acid added to give drinks their tangy taste might be to blame. 'Even diet colas, though low in sugar, can be bad for teeth, because of the citric acid in diet and sweetened fizzy drinks,' said Professor Damian Walmsley, scientific adviser to the British Dental Association.

Fizzy water can also damage teeth because it contains carbonic acid, formed when carbon dioxide is dissolved in water, which erodes tooth enamel.

“The more sugary and fizzy drinks consumed by women, the greater the density of their breasts - a known risk factor for cancer”

'Even one glass can cause microscopic levels of the outer surface of the enamel to dissolve, and when we consume something acidic, the mouth stays acidic for 45 minutes before returning to a normal pH level,' says **Professor Andrew Eder** of University College London's Eastman Dental Institute.

However, you'd need to drink sparkling water on a daily basis for years to suffer the effect - one or two glasses a week won't hurt.
