

Water, water everywhere

Summer is here! Blue skies; clear, cool lakes and pools and long, warm lazy days stretch out in front of us. Just as the temperatures begin to climb, so does our consumption of soft drinks. Unlike water, soft drinks do not have any benefits to our overall health. However, people continue to drink soda instead of water, especially students in schools with easy access to pop machines. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says the access that school kids have to soda is contributing to obesity and oral health problems. According to a policy statement released in January by the AAP “schools should restrict or eliminate soft drink sales on school grounds to curb over consumption and the myriad of health problems that occur in kids who over consume.” The policy, which appeared in the January issue of *The Journal of Pediatrics* said school administrators, educators, and pediatricians should work toward providing kids with a more healthful alternative to soda.

However, many school districts are strapped for cash. Soda machines are seen as a way to fund extracurricular activities and sporting programs. In exchange for exclusive soda selling rights in school districts, soft drink giants offer substantial financial backing for athletic and educational programs. The long-term deals, known as “pouring-rights” contracts, can be worth millions of dollars. More than 300 school districts in 30 states have entered into a pouring-rights contract since 1998. Overall, soda consumption is on the rise. We need to educate our kids, school districts, and community about the harm sweetened soft drinks causes, as well as the alternatives that are available. So let’s take a quick look at the question of what’s better – water or Coke? We all know that water is important but when you see the comparison between drinking water and drinking soda, it becomes even clearer that soft drinks are unhealthy.

- 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated; in 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger. Even mild dehydration will slow down one’s metabolism as much as 3%.
- One glass of water shut down midnight hunger for almost 100% of the dieters in a University of Washington study.
- Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue. Preliminary research indicated that 8-10 glasses of water a day significantly eases back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers. Drinking five glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, slashes the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and cuts the risk of bladder cancer by 50%.
- A mere 1% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on a computer screen or a printed page.

Water is an important part of our overall health. When we start replacing it with something else, such as soda, we negatively affect our health.

Let’s look at some properties of Coke:

- You can put a T-bone steak in a bowl of Coke and it will dissolve in two days. To clean a toilet, pour a can of Coke into the toilet bowl and let it sit for one hour, then flush clean. The citric acid in Coke removes stains from vitreous china.
- In many states, the highway patrol carries two gallons of Coke in the trunk to remove blood from the highway after a car accident. To clean corrosion from car battery terminals, pour a can of Coke over the terminals to eat away the corrosion. To loosen a rusted bolt for several minutes.
- To remove grease from clothes empty a can of Coke into the load, add detergent, and run through a regular cycle. The Coke will help loosen grease stains.

So why is it that Coke has such great cleaning properties? The active ingredient is phosphoric acid. Its pH is 2.8, and it will dissolve a nail in about four days. Phosphoric acid also leaches calcium from bones and is a major contributor to osteoporosis. For a commercial truck to carry Coca-Cola syrup (the concentrate), the truck must use the Hazardous Material cards reserved for highly corrosive materials. Coke is “the real thing.” The problem is that the real thing you’re given is a corrosive acid with four teaspoons of sugar.

Let your patients know that their dental health, as well as their overall health, is a risk when they replace water with corrosive, sugary sodas. Water is one of the healthiest liquids you could ever drink, so let’s encourage people to grab an ice cold water instead.

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