

TRANSCRIPT

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS AND OBESITY

Hello everyone. I'm Dr. David Perlmutter.

You know there are so many diet books when you go to Amazon, or you go to the bookstore. You see so many books written about various diets these days, and whether these diets have a focus on eating for your blood type or being gluten-free or high-fiber, or eating Paleo, one thing that really has emerged as a common thread, or central theme, is the notion that we've really got to avoid eating sugar.

I think we're seeing so much information now really pointing a finger at sugar, and also making it quite clear that the reason we got into this mess is because of an industry that really wanted us to eat more sugar and, at the same time, less fat. But that said, you know, the food industry, this has not gone unnoticed by them. The food industry has really understood this and, as such, has really pushed us to be aware of non-sugar sweetened, artificially sweetened products, like beverages, sodas, etc., or making a huge push to make people aware that sugar-free this and that are available. The problem is that when you're avoiding sugar and using sugar-free beverages, and artificially sweetened foods and beverages, you're actually setting the stage for more weight gain, and even for type 2 diabetes. Now that sounds really counterintuitive doesn't it! You're consuming food that has virtually no sugar, and if it's in the case of a soda, has no calories.

And yet, it increases your risk for gaining weight! How does it happen? We're going to find out in just a moment. But first, I want to just jump to a recent study from Canadian researchers, and let's explore what they've found.

So this study is called *Chronic low calorie sweetener use and risk of abdominal obesity among older adults, a cohort study*. What does it actually mean, and what was actually done in the study? Here's what they did.

They took close to fifteen hundred participants and they followed this group for approximately 10 years. They looked at what are called anthropometric measurements, things like the size of their belly the size of their abdominal fat, and they looked at various other measures, like weight gain,

body mass index etc. But they also looked at what are called their food diaries, and paid particular attention to their usage, or not, of low calorie sweeteners. And here's what they began to notice when they looked at the data.

When comparing users of low calorie sweeteners in relation to non-users, and looking specifically at what is called Body Mass Index, the non-users of these artificial sweeteners actually had a reduction over time in their body mass index, in comparison to a pretty dramatic increase in the body mass index in people using these low calorie sweeteners. Now, when you look at waist circumference again, you see that the waistline of people using these non-caloric sweeteners, these artificially sweetened beverages (diet this, diet that), have a bigger and bigger belly as time goes on, whereas people who refuse these drinks generally tend to lose weight. Their conclusion was that, independent of the calorie content, in other words you know really getting away from this notion of calories in versus calories out, that the specific food eaten affects subsequent eating behavior.

We knew that it influences intestinal microbiota and that contributes to energy handling and interacts with the endocrine system and neuroendocrine systems. All of which are mechanisms which ultimately affect energy homeostasis. Through these mechanisms, low calorie sweetener use may be a contributor to the obesity epidemic.

This is also a very interesting study again demonstrating that those individuals who favor the use of artificial sweeteners over the course of the study, averaging about 10 years (5,300 adults), actually had significant worsening of things like abdominal fat, body mass index and overall tendency to gain more weight. Other studies have shown a significant increase in risk for Type 2 diabetes in people using artificial sweeteners.

Again why that might sound a bit counterintuitive at first when we recognize that artificial sweeteners have a profound detrimental or damaging effect on the gut microbiome the microbiota, the organisms that live there. It sort of changes our gut bacteria to the extent that we actually get signals from our gut bacteria telling us that we're starving and we tenaciously hold on to every calorie thus leading to increased weight gain and inflammation - hallmarks of many of our chronic degenerative conditions, including type 2 diabetes.

So again, let's avoid these artificial sweeteners. Very, very detrimental towards health. If you want to drink something, drink water. Who knew? Thanks for listening. I'm Dr. David Perlmutter.

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