Sweet drinks kill you softly
Sugar poses huge risk of cancer, study reveals

DOWNING soft drinks increases your risk of cancer even if the sugar is not showing up on your waistline researchers have found.

A study of 35,000 Australians has shown that regardless of a person’s body size, their risk of suffering from 11 cancers rose sharply if they drank one or more soft drinks a day.

Diseases such as aggressive prostate, ovarian, stomach, kidney, colorectal, pancreatic and post-menopausal breast cancers are usually associated with obesity. However, the Cancer Council and University of Melbourne study found frequent sugary drink consumption also increased their risk by 18 per cent.

More surprisingly, Associate Professor Allison Hodge said the increased cancer risk from sugar was present regardless of whether the drinker was overweight or not.

This is just another reason to avoid sugary soft drinks, she said. “Our study found that the more sugary soft drinks participants drank, the higher their risk of cancer.”

The not-so-sweet results, which are published in the Public Health Nutrition journal today, were supported by findings showing the chances of suffering from the cancers did not rise for those who drank diet versions of the drinks.

Artificial colouring in both full and reduced-sugar versions of the drinks did not seem to affect cancer risk, suggesting to the Melbourne researchers that sugar was the problem.

But while the lack of sugar may limit one danger from diet soft drinks, dietitian and Live Lighter campaign manager Alison McAleese said they came with other issues and should also be avoided.

“We know there are some other risks around them (diet soft drinks), for instance it looks like there is a connection between diet drinks and gaining weight, and they are also bad for your teeth,” she said.

“Soft drinks are still really popular, particularly with adolescents and young people. We know Australians are getting around 52 per cent of their added sugar from drinks.

“Cutting back on sugary drinks is the best thing you can do to reduce your added sugars and it will probably help to improve your diet.”

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