

The *Washington Post* released an interesting report on the deleterious and habit-forming effects of soda pop---especially among our youth during their peak bone-building years--- that the so-called 'soft drink' manufacturers are really hoping you won't pay attention to and don't want you to see.

So of course, here it is. Please share it especially with your children and grandchildren.

Bone Weakening

Animal studies demonstrate that **phosphorus**, a common ingredient in soda, **can deplete bones of calcium.**

And two recent human studies suggest that girls who drink more soda are more prone to broken bones. The industry denies that soda plays a role in bone weakening. Animal studies -- mostly involving rats -- point to clear and consistent bone loss with the use of cola beverages. But as scientists like to point out, humans and rats are not exactly the same.

Even so, there's been concern among the research community, public health officials and government agencies over the high phosphorus content in the US diet. Phosphorus -- which occurs naturally in some foods and is used as an additive in many others -- appears to weaken bones by promoting the loss of calcium. With less calcium available, the bones become more porous and prone to fracture.

The soft drink industry argues that the phosphoric acid in soda pop contributes only about 2 percent of the phosphorus in the typical US diet, with a 12-ounce can of soda pop averaging about 30 milligrams.

There's growing concern that even a **few cans of soda today can be damaging when they are consumed during the peak bone-building years of childhood and adolescence.** A 1996 study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* by the FDA's Office of Special Nutritionals noted that a pattern of high phosphorus/low calcium consumption, common in the American diet, is not conducive to optimizing peak bone mass in young women.

A **1994 Harvard study** of bone fractures in teenage athletes found a **strong association between cola beverage consumption and bone fractures** in 14-year-old girls. **The girls who drank cola were about five times more likely to suffer bone fractures than girls who didn't consume soda pop.**

Besides, to many researchers, the combination of **rising obesity** and **bone weakening** has the potential to synergistically undermine future health. Adolescents and kids don't think long-term. But what happens when these soft-drinking people become young or middle-aged adults and they have osteoporosis, sedentary living and obesity?

By that time, switching to water, milk or fruit juice may be too little, too late.