

The Catholic Doctor is In: Nature's Gifts

There have been several recent medical studies that have surprised me. Up until recently I would counsel my patients that liked to drink regular soda to switch to diet soda to try to reduce their risk of weight gain. It just made sense to me that eliminating about 140 calories that come in a can of pop was the healthy thing to do. Now, there is scientific evidence that drinking diet sodas actually worsens obesity, and in particular increases belly fat, which has been associated with an increased risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer, and overall mortality. The actual reason for weight gain with diet soda consumption is somewhat speculative. It may be that artificial sweeteners effect the brain and metabolic rate, or it may be as simple as diet soda enthusiasts believe they have the right to eat more because, after all, they just drank a diet drink! My advice is for the most part to eliminate any type of soda from your diet. You can't go wrong with water; an all-natural drink with no calories created by God the Father.

Another recent study showed that 1-2 cups of caffeinated coffee per day reduces the incidence of dementia as we age. So don't feel guilty if you like to partake in a few cups of java each day. The threshold where coffee may begin to be harmful is in the range of greater than 4 cups per day, so don't overdo. As always, if you have figured out by past experience that you and coffee don't get along then listen to your body, and consider alternatives like green tea which also has health benefits.

We have been blessed by many wonderful natural options here on earth, that no doubt, God created for our use and pleasure. Water, coffee, and tea are just a select few. Stay healthy and enjoy the many natural gifts from God.

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