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Mixing Alcohol With Diet Soda Instead of Regular Soda Leads to Faster Intoxication

People who mix diet soda with alcohol get more intoxicated, and more quickly, compared with those who use regular soda in their alcoholic drinks, a small study suggests.

The study of 16 college students found those who drank diet soda and alcohol became about 20 percent more intoxicated than those who mixed regular soda and alcohol, CNN reports. Sugar in mixed drinks slows down alcohol's effects, the researchers report in an upcoming issue of Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research.

The researchers from Northern Kentucky University gave college students vodka with diet soda at one session, and vodka with regular soda during another session. Each drink had the potency of about four mixed drinks—enough to raise blood alcohol levels to approximately the legal driving limit. The students consumed the drink in an average of 10 minutes, the article notes.

Students took breath tests to measure their alcohol levels. Those who drank vodka with regular soda registered just below the legal driving limit, while those who drank vodka and diet soda were above the limit. "What you choose to mix your alcohol with could possibly be the difference between breaking or not breaking the law," study author Cecile Marczinski told CNN.

Participants also completed computer tasks that tested their reaction times. Those whose drinks contained diet soda reacted more slowly than the regular soda drinks.

There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than young people. In some ways it feels like it is an issue everywhere: for you, your family and your friends. Plain and simple, try as you might, you cannot escape the issues of alcohol and drugs. Nationwide, alcohol and drugs affect each and very one of us, directly or indirectly: in our homes, in our families, in our school, in our dorm, in our community, town or city. Click here to learn more.