# Calorie Control Council Disputes Research on Diet Soda

ATLANTA (PRNewswire) — Findings presented at the American College of Cardiology Annual Conference assessing the potential association of post-menopausal female diet soda [1] intake and risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and stroke, are flawed, do not support the majority of the scientific evidence on the topic, and are at odds with statements from the American Heart Association.

"The study findings are very speculative and should be considered with caution as they have not been peer reviewed by independent scientists or published in a scientific journal," said Haley Stevens, Ph.D., President of the Calorie Control Council. "Additionally, these findings of postmenopausal women are not in line with the majority of the research on the general population which has concluded that there is no association between low-calorie sweeteners and cardiovascular events."

Since the study was an observational study, cause and effect could not be determined. The study author stated, "We only found an association, so we can't say that diet drinks cause these problems." Other factors about people who drink diet drinks could explain the connection. Further, the authors did not take into account many dietary factors related to heart disease, such as fat consumption, in their analysis, which could explain the results.

"The findings from this study are not relevant to the general population since only postmenopausal women were studied," said Registered Dietitian Robyn Flipse. "A large body of scientific research supports the safety of low calorie sweeteners and does not suggest their consumption is linked to heart disease. Low calorie sweeteners can be helpful tools in weight management and are safe to consume."

A July 2013 review of aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener often used in diet sodas, examined over a decade's worth of data on aspartame as related to poor health outcomes including different types of cancer and cardiovascular events. The authors concluded that, "low-calorie sweeteners are not related to vascular events..."1

The findings are also at odds with statements made by the American Heart Association (AHA). With regards to low-calorie sweeteners, AHA states, "The AHA strongly recommends limiting added sugars. Too much sugar can lead to weight gain, and those extra pounds can lead to a string of health problems. In addition to obesity, it can increase triglyceride levels, a risk factor for heart disease. Replacing sugary foods and drinks with sugar-free options containing non-nutritive sweeteners is one way to limit calories and achieve or maintain a healthy weight."2

Low-calorie sweeteners used in diet sodas are some of the most thoroughly studied food ingredients in the food supply. The safety of low-calorie sweeteners has been

reaffirmed time and time again by leading regulatory and governmental agencies around the world including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

*References*

*Marinovich M, Galli CL, Bosetti C, Gallus S, La Vecchia C.* Aspartame, low-calorie sweeteners and disease: regulatory safety and epidemiological issues. *[2] Food Chem Toxicol, 2013. 60: 109-115.*

*American Heart Association. Non-nutritive sweeteners (artificial sweeteners). Available at:* http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/Artificial-Sweeteners_UCM_305880_Article.jsp *[3].*

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