

Diet soda may alter gut microbes

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

The debate over whether diet sodas are good, bad or just OK for us never seems to end.

Some research suggests zero-calorie drinks can help people cut calories and fend off weight gain.

But in recent years, the idea that artificial sweeteners may trick the brain and lead to “metabolic derangements,” as one researcher has theorized, has gained traction, too.

Now, a study published in the journal *Nature* introduces a new idea: Diet sodas may alter our gut microbes in a way that increases the risk of metabolic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes – at least in some of us.

In the paper, researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel describe what happened when they fed zero-calorie sweeteners, including saccharin, aspartame and sucralose, to mice.

“To our surprise, [the mice] developed glucose intolerance,” Weizmann researcher Eran Elinav tells us.

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