

# Should You Drink Soda for an Upset Stomach?



Some people swear by drinking soda, especially ginger ale, to cure an upset stomach. But is soda ever the cure for your health woes?

“That’s not necessarily the best thing for the stomach,” gastroenterologist Braden Kuo of Massachusetts General Hospital tells in a recent interview. Between the carbonation, the acidity, and the cold of a soda straight from the fridge, it’s just about the worst thing you can drink. However, Kuo recommends drinking a warm, flat ginger ale, because ginger helps the stomach relax. Ginger has been used to aid digestion for thousands of years.

However, there’s only a tiny bit of ginger in common ginger ales made by companies like Canada Dry or Schweppes (“natural flavors” are some of the last ingredients listed on the bottle, and ginger is just one of several flavors included).

Furthermore, a 2009 study that reviewed decades of research found no evidence that flat sodas could rehydrate sick kids. “Carbonated drinks, flat or otherwise, including cola, provide inadequate fluid and electrolyte replacement and cannot be recommended,” the study authors declared in a press release. Sodas contain far more sugar and too little sodium to help people rehydrate after vomiting and diarrhea. Cola, the researchers found in particular, had more than seven times the amount of sugar recommended by the World Health Organization for rehydrating drinks, and essentially no useful electrolytes.

You might want to reach for the ginger tea rather than the ginger ale, in other words. That drink tastes better warm, anyway.