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FINALLY People Starting to Consume Less Sugar!

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A new report finds that Americans are consuming less sugar than they did about a decade ago. About two-thirds of this decrease is the result of people drinking fewer sugar-sweetened sodas.

The percentage of sugar in the U.S. diet dropped from 18 percent between 1999 and 2000 to 14.6 percent between 2007 and 2008. Researchers analyzed data from a study of more than 42,000 and calculated that Americans consumed about 100 grams of added sugar a day during 1999/2000, while they consumed 77 grams of added sugar a day during 2007/2008.

According to the Huffington Post:

"But while this study shows that we're technically consuming less sugar, that doesn't mean that the total amount we consume is low. An American Heart Association statement in 2009 said that Americans consume the equivalent of 22 teaspoons of sugar a day, with teens consuming 34 teaspoons a day."

While all sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages may promote the development of obesity, it has been theorized that drinks sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup may be particularly detrimental to health, as they contain fructose in its 'free' monosaccharide form.

A new experiment tested whether consuming 'free' fructose had a greater impact on body weight and metabolic abnormalities than when consumed 'bound' within the disaccharide sucrose. When rats were given access to sugar beverages, they all consumed 20 percent more calories, developed larger abdominal fat pads and higher triglyceride levels and exhibited impaired insulin/glucose homeostasis. However, the rats with a higher fructose intake fared worse.

According to the study, as reported by Green Med Info:



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"A metabolic profile indicating increased risk of diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease was observed in animals given access to sugar-sweetened beverages. Notably, 'free' fructose disrupted glucose homeostasis more than did 'bound' fructose, thus posing a greater risk of progression to type 2 diabetes."

Separate research has also determined that adults who consumed high fructose corn syrup for two weeks as 25 percent of their caloric intake had increased blood levels of cholesterol and triglycerides. These have been shown to be indicators of increased risk for heart disease.

The "Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010" suggest an upper limit of 25 percent or less of daily calories consumed as added sugar. To investigate this advice, researchers examined what happened when young adults consumed fructose, high fructose corn syrup or glucose at the 25 percent upper limit.

According to Eurekalert:

"They found that within two weeks, study participants consuming fructose or high fructose corn syrup, but not glucose, exhibited increased concentrations of LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and apolipoprotein-B (a protein which can lead to plaques that cause vascular disease)."



Sources:

- » [Huffington Post July 28, 2011](#)
- » [American Journal of Clinical Nutrition July 13, 2011](#)
- » [European Journal of Nutrition July 29, 2011](#)
- » [Green Med Info](#)
- » [Eurekalert July 28, 2011](#)
- » Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM) October 2011

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

You've often heard me state that soda is the number one source of calories in the U.S. diet, which it was—based on the 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). But times are indeed changing, and it appears many Americans are wising up to the notion that sugar and fructose (like the high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) in soda) are among the worst foods you can eat.

As a result, and revealed by a cross-sectional study of U.S. residents using dietary data from NHANES 1999-2008, the intake of added sugars decreased from 18 percent between 1999 and 2000 to 14.6 percent between 2007 and 2008. This amounts to a consumption of about 100 grams of added sugar a day during 1999-2000, compared with 77 grams of added sugar a day during 2007-2008. This is an excellent sign that more Americans are taking steps to take control of their health ... but we still have a long road to travel.

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Soda is No Longer the Number One Source of Calories ... But Grains and Sugar Are

According to last year's [Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), the [top 10 sources of calories](#) in the American diet are:

1. Grain-based desserts (cakes, cookies, donuts, pies, crisps, cobblers, and granola bars) 139 calories a day	1. Alcoholic beverages
1. Yeast breads, 129 calories a day	1. Pasta and pasta dishes
1. Chicken and chicken-mixed dishes, 121 calories a day	1. Mexican mixed dishes
1. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks, 114 calories a day	1. Beef and beef-mixed dishes
1. Pizza, 98 calories a day	1. Dairy desserts



Soda now comes in at number four, but it hasn't exactly been ousted from the number one spot by a much better alternative. Grain-based desserts, such as cakes, cookies and doughnuts, now make up the number one source of calories. What's the primary component in this food group? Sugar and grains, typically wheat. As the new analysis in the [American Journal of Clinical Nutrition](#) noted, it's true that sugar consumption is now declining, but our consumption levels are so high to begin with that this doesn't say much about the state of our diets:

"Although the consumption of added sugars in the United States decreased between 1999-2000 and 2007-2008, primarily because of a reduction in soda consumption, mean intakes continue to exceed recommended limits."

I'll say. As far as sugar consumption goes, America is still a nation with a sweet tooth, and most are still consuming far too much sugary soda, candy and desserts.

The Type of Sugar You Eat Matters

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You will see most public health agencies stating that sugar is sugar, no matter what the form, and even that a calorie is a calorie, regardless of the source. But there is a very big difference in both the type of sugar you consume, as well as the source of your calories.

They are not all created equal!

Thanks to the excellent work of researchers like [Dr. Robert Lustig](#) and [Dr. Richard Johnson](#), we now know that fructose:

- Is metabolized differently from glucose, with the majority being turned directly into *fat*
- Tricks your body into gaining weight by fooling your metabolism, as it turns off your body's appetite-control system. Fructose does not appropriately stimulate insulin, which in turn does not suppress ghrelin (the "hunger hormone") and doesn't stimulate leptin (the "satiety hormone"), which together result in your eating more and developing insulin resistance.
- Rapidly leads to weight gain and abdominal obesity ("beer belly"), decreased HDL, increased LDL, elevated triglycerides, elevated blood sugar, and high blood pressure—i.e., classic metabolic syndrome.
- Over time leads to insulin resistance, which is not only an underlying factor of type 2 diabetes and heart disease, but also many cancers.



[According to Dr. Robert Lustig](#), fructose is "isocaloric but not isometabolic." This means you can have the same amount of calories from fructose or glucose, fructose and protein, or fructose and fat, but the *metabolic effect* will be entirely different despite the identical calorie count. This is a VERY important point so let me repeat it. Most will need to read this seven times or more to fully realize the implications of this simple yet HIGHLY profound, and radically revolutionary important statement:

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This means you can have the same amount of calories from fructose or glucose, fructose and protein, or fructose and fat, but the metabolic effect will be entirely different despite the identical calorie count.

This is largely because different nutrients provoke different hormonal responses, and those hormonal responses determine, among other things, how much fat you accumulate. This is why the idea that you can lose weight by [counting calories simply doesn't work](#)...

Fructose Proven Far More Harmful Than Sugar


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New research published in the [European Journal of Nutrition](#) once again showed that high-fructose corn syrup may be particularly detrimental to health, as it contains fructose in its 'free' monosaccharide form. In rats given access to sugary beverages, all of them displayed markers of increased risk of diabetes and heart disease, but those given 'free' fructose has the most significantly disrupted glucose homeostasis, which means they had the greatest risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

To put it simply, because most fructose is consumed in liquid form (i.e. [soda](#) and sweetened beverages of all kinds) its negative metabolic effects are magnified. So while HFCS has about *the same amount* of fructose as cane sugar, the fructose in HFCS is in its "free" form and not attached to any other carbs.

The fructose in fruits and in cane sugar is bonded to other sugars, which results in a decrease in its metabolic toxicity. That said, even consuming an excess of fruits is not recommended, as consuming any foods that contain high amounts of fructose -- even if it's a natural product -- is, to put it bluntly, the fastest way to trash your health. Among the health problems you invite with a high-fructose diet are:

Obesity	Metabolic syndrome	Insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes
Elevated triglycerides and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels	High blood pressure and heart disease	Liver disease
Arthritis	Gout	Cancer



Eating This Will Massively Increase Your Risk for Heart Disease

If you need even more reason to limit fructose in your diet, another new study, slated to be published in the October 2011 issue of the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM), showed that consuming high fructose corn syrup for two weeks in an amount that totals 25 percent of your caloric intake leads to increases in blood levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, which may increase your risk for heart disease.

Further, we now know that [fructose elevates uric acid](#), which decreases nitric oxide, raises angiotensin, and causes your smooth muscle cells to contract, thereby raising your blood pressure and potentially damaging your kidneys. Increased uric acid also leads to [chronic, low-level inflammation](#), which has far-reaching consequences for your health. For example, chronically inflamed blood vessels lead to heart attacks and strokes. Also, a good deal of evidence exists that some cancers are caused by chronic inflammation.


So How Much Fructose is Safe to Eat?

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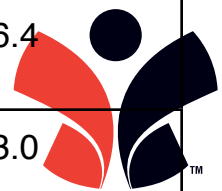
If you want to shed excess pounds and maintain a healthy weight long-term, and **RADICALLY** reduce (and in many cases virtually eliminate) your risk of diabetes, heart disease and cancer, then start getting serious about restricting your consumption of fructose to no more than 25 grams per day. If you're already overweight, or have any of these diseases or are at high risk of any of them, then you're probably better off cutting that down to 10-15 grams per day.

Fifteen grams of fructose is not much -- it represents two bananas, one-third cup of raisins, or two Medjool dates. In his book, [The Sugar Fix](#), Dr. Johnson includes detailed tables showing the content of fructose in different foods -- an information base that isn't readily available when you're trying to find out exactly how much fructose is in various foods. I encourage you to pick up a copy of this excellent resource.

I've also included a chart below of fructose levels in fruit to give you an idea of what 25 grams a day looks like. Just remember fruit is only *one* source, as fructose is a staple ingredient in the vast majority of sweetened beverages and processed foods of all kinds, from pre-packaged meals to baked goods and condiments.

Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose	Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose
Limes	1 medium	0	Boysenberries	1 cup	4.6 
Lemons	1 medium	0.6	Tangerine/ mandarin orange	1 medium	4.8
Cranberries	1 cup	0.7	Nectarine	1 medium	5.4
Passion Fruit	1 medium	0.9	Peach	1 medium	5.9
Prune	1 medium	1.2	Orange (navel)	1 medium	6.1
Apricot	1 medium	1.3	Papaya	1/2 medium	6.3
Guave	2 medium	2.2	Honeydew	1/8 of medium melon	6.7
Date (Deglet Noor style)	1 medium	2.6	Banana	1 medium	7.1
Cantaloupe	1/8 of med. melon	2.8	Blueberries	1 cup	7.4
Raspberries	1 cup	3.0	Date (Medjool)	1 medium	7.7
Clementine	1 medium	3.4	Apple (composite)	1 medium	9.5

Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose	Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose
Kiwifruit	1 medium	3.4	Persimmon	1 medium	10.6
Blackberries	1 cup	3.5	Watermelon	(1/16 med. melon)	11.3
Star Fruit	1 medium	3.6	Pear	1 medium	11.8
Cherries (Sweet)	10	3.8	Raisins	1/4 cup	12.3
Strawberries	1 cup	3.8	Grapes, seedless (green or red)	1 cup	12.4
Cherries (Sour)	1 cup	4.0	Mango	1/2 medium	16.2
Pineapple	1 slice (3.5" x .75")	4.0	Apricots, dried	1 cup	16.4
Grapefruit, pink or red	1/2 medium	4.3	Figs, dried	1 cup	23.0



What Can You Use to Sweeten Your Food if You Don't Eat Sugar? (Hint: NOT Artificial Sweeteners)

It's important to realize that when we talk about "sugar," ALL sugars are included. So when you're evaluating your sugar consumption, you can't stop counting once you've accounted for the number of spoons of table sugar you've added to foods and beverages. You must also include all other types of sweeteners, such as HFCS, honey and [agave](#).

But please do not resort to using artificial sweeteners to sweeten your food once you limit sugar. There's little doubt in my mind that [artificial sweeteners can be even worse than sugar and fructose](#), and there is scientific evidence to back up that conclusion. I've compiled a long list of scientific [studies into the health effects of aspartame](#), and it covers a range of concerns, from behavioral- and mood changes, to brain damage, weight gain, pre-term delivery, and cancer.

[Splenda is another artificial sweetener](#) that is touting their "improved" versions as a smart and healthy way to sweeten your food, but please do not be misled. Splenda is likely to push your health in the wrong direction, and there's *nothing* smart about that ...

Consuming artificial sweeteners can cause distortions in your biochemistry, and if you drink diet soda in an attempt to lose weight, it won't help you. Instead, most studies looking at this show very clearly that diet soft drinks actually [increase your obesity risk](#) by stimulating your appetite, increasing carbohydrate cravings, and stimulating fat storage!

So please, do your homework on this, and do not be swayed by sweet-talking dietitians, doctors, or any other health professional that tells you artificial sweeteners have gotten the 'green light' and are safe to use. There's simply too much evidence pointing in the other direction. So, what can you use if you want an occasional sweetener? I recommend using:

1. The herb stevia (my favorites are the liquid forms that come in flavors like French Vanilla and English Toffee)
2. Dextrose (pure glucose) (glucose can be used directly by every cell in your body and as such is far safer than the metabolic poison fructose)

And remember, switching to cane sugar, honey, date sugar, coconut sugar, brown rice syrup, fruit juice, molasses, maple syrup, sucanat, sorghum, turbinado or agave syrup will NOT ameliorate any of the risks of sugar consumption, as they all contain HIGH amounts of fructose.

