

The Health Dangers of Refined Sugars

Exploring Sugar Alternatives and the Safest Options

Extensive research has proven that the consumption of sugar in all its forms is taking a devastating toll on our health. The consumption of sugar has become a regular addiction that the average person faces each day. Sugar has become the main source of calories in the American diet, with the majority of those calories coming from high fructose corn syrup. It is mind blowing to see how the consumption of sugar has multiplied over the past 200 years:

- In 1800, the average person ingested approximately 18 pounds of sugar per year.
- In 1900, individual consumption had gone up to 90 pounds of sugar per year.
- In 2009, more than 50 percent of Americans consumed one-half pound of sugar per day, totaling more than 150 pounds of sugar per year.

Research has shown that sugars actually have true physical addiction tendencies and that they are the main contributors to the obesity epidemic we are facing. Excess body fat percentage increases your risk for deadly conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes. The large amount of sugar that Americans consume on a daily basis contributes to an immune system that operates at sub-optimal levels day in and day out. Sugar has a “poison-like” effect on the body – it is the leading reason for several diseases and degenerative issues, it destructs the immune system, and it contributes to serious health issues like obesity, tooth decay, diabetes, damage to the pancreas, premature aging, osteoporosis and hyperactivity in children. Sugar also contributes to intensifying heart disease and autoimmune diseases such as arthritis, asthma and multiple sclerosis.

From a metabolic point of view, refined sugars are completely stripped of all natural healthy components like vitamins and minerals; therefore, they only consist of a simple carbohydrate, which has absolutely no health benefits. This incomplete carbohydrate metabolism forms harmful toxins in the body and high uric acids levels, which in turn interrupts the natural metabolic function and leads to the formation of degenerative diseases and a higher risk for heart disease.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with all of the different forms of sugars, including non-calorie sugar substitutes.

Dextrose, fructose and glucose are all monosaccharides, also known as simple sugars. The primary difference between them is how your body metabolizes them. “Dextrose” is the primary term used on the ingredient list from food manufactures.

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is a laboratory-made sugar consisting of 55 percent fructose and 45 percent glucose. This is probably the most dangerous form of sugar because the entire burden on metabolizing HFCS falls with the liver, which can result in permanent liver damage. Sugar alcohols like xylitol, glycerol, sorbitol, maltitol, mannitol and erythritol are neither sugars nor alcohols but are becoming increasingly popular as sweeteners in mainstream “diet” products. They are not completely digested in the intestine, so they provide fewer calories than sugar but often cause problems with bloating, diarrhea and flatulence.

Sucralose is not a sugar, it is a chlorinated artificial sweetener in line with aspartame and saccharin, with detrimental health effects to match. These risks include increasing risk for cancer, bone disease and migraines, to name a few.

Honey in the raw is approximately 50 percent fructose, but it is completely natural in its raw form and has many health benefits when used in moderation, including a high antioxidant profile.

Stevia is a highly sweet herb derived from the leaf of the South American stevia plant, which is completely safe in its natural form.

Just like any supplement or food product, the integrity and quality of the product is essential for receiving the optimal health benefits. Based on our extensive product research, Service Foods has chosen to carry SweetLeaf®, the 100 percent natural stevia sweetener. This decision was based on the high-quality processing and all-natural profile of SweetLeaf®.

The stevia plants used to make SweetLeaf® are grown South America, where the plant is native and has the best conditions for optimal growth and nutrient content.

SweetLeaf® uses the entire stevia leaf, not just the sweetest part of the leaf like other stevia manufacturers. This process increases the nutrient value, and consumers have commented that they prefer the balanced taste compared to other products.

Furthermore, during the processing portion of SweetLeaf®, only purified water is used, unlike other manufacturers who use chemicals like methanol or ethanol. Instead of using nutrient-free fillers like sugar, SweetLeaf® stevia is blended with inulin, the fibrous extract from the chickaree root, which in itself has numerous health benefits.

Using SweetLeaf® 100 percent natural stevia sweetener in moderation is a safe way to start eliminating sugars, HFCS and artificial sweeteners from your diet.

Resources:

Johnson, R.J. and Gower, T. (2009). *The Sugar Fix: The High-Fructose Fallout That is Making You Sick and Fat*, New York: Rodale Inc.

Naked Food Cooking. What is the Best Sweetener? Retrieved from <http://www.nakedfoodcooking.com/best-sweetener/>

Stanhope, Kimber L., et al. "Consuming fructose-sweetened, not glucose-sweetened, beverages increases visceral adiposity and lipids and decreases insulin sensitivity in overweight/obese humans." *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* 119(5) (2009): 1322-1334.

SweetLeaf® Stevia Sweetener. Retrieved from <http://www.sweetleaf.com/>