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Sugar - A Poor Choice

by Raymond Francis

Health is a choice. If you choose health, sugar is not an option. Sugar is a dangerous metabolic poison and a leading contributor to our epidemic of chronic disease. If we want to vastly improve health, one single choice we can make is to stop, or at least minimize, sugar consumption. The less you eat and the less frequently you eat it, the better off you will be.

History

Our biologic ancestors did not have access to sugars in the refined forms that exist today. Sugar was a rare commodity, found primarily in fresh fruits, or perhaps a batch of honey. Advents in technology brought forth the first sugar refineries during the Napoleonic period. At that time sugar was expensive, and average consumption was about 7 pounds per year. By the end of the 19th century, sugar was affordable, and available to almost everyone. Since 1909, sugar consumption has increased by 70%. Americans now eat an average of about 150 pounds of sugar per year, up 25 pounds (20%) since 1970! In terms of caloric content, sugar makes up more than 25% of the average American's diet and up to 50% of some children's diets! An empty calorie food with no nutritional value whatsoever, sugar is replacing valuable complex carbohydrates as a source of energy for humans. Historically we did not eat these refined sugars, and doing so throws the body into a chaotic state of dysregulation.

Overview

Here's the problem: The human body was simply not designed to handle refined sugars. They bring about a deadly combination of malnutrition and toxicity. Refined sugar is new to the human diet, and people are eating an enormous amount of it—almost half a pound per day! Feeding refined sugar to a human body is similar to burning high-octane aircraft fuel in an automobile engine. Impressive amounts of energy, but after a while, you damage the engine. Metabolizing refined sugar is quite a challenge, but if forced to, the body will struggle to cope with it. This struggle causes serious disturbances, and after time, disease is the guaranteed result. If sugar were introduced today as a new product, the FDA would not approve it. FDA approval requires that a product be safe. Evidence that sugar damages health is overwhelming. It has been associated with diabetes, tooth decay, heart disease, cancer, and other diseases. In fact, the rise of chronic disease in modern societies has paralleled the rise in sugar consumption. When these facts are examined, one might consider feeding sugar to children a form of child abuse... Instead, we give children sweets as a "reward" for being good!

Nutrient Deficiencies

Food is supposed to support life. Sugar will not support the life of humans, animals, insects, or even bacteria. Sugar really isn't food! Sugar requires specific nutrients in order to metabolize in the body. The refining process strips these nutrients from the source materials like sugar cane, so that metabolism requires the body to deplete itself. The body uses up its reserves, causing deficiencies of various B vitamins, magnesium, chromium, and other nutrients. Here are some examples of clinically significant sugar-related deficiencies:

- 20 psychotic teenagers, being unsuccessfully treated with psychotherapy and tranquilizers, were completely cured by vitamin B1 supplementation. Sugar had depleted their B vitamin reserves making them deficient and causing abnormal behavior. One can be sure there are tens of thousands of teens out there right now with similar problems.

- Chromium deficiencies have been linked to both excessive sugar consumption and heart disease. Coronary disease patients average twice the sugar consumption of healthier people, and have significantly less chromium in their tissues.
- Sugar and vitamin C use the same transport mechanism. Excessive sugar intake overloads this transport system and may cause vitamin C deficiencies.
- Sugar promotes bone loss and causes osteoporosis.
- Sugar inhibits the release of omega 6 essential fatty acids from storage in fat tissues, thereby contributing to essential fatty acid deficiency.

Metabolic Chaos: Heart Disease, Hypoglycemia & Immunosuppression

Sugar throws body chemistry into biochemical chaos lasting for six to eight hours after consumption. During this period, hormone, fat, carbohydrate, and protein metabolism are greatly disrupted. After consumption, refined sugar is rapidly absorbed by the body, which dangerously increases the sugar content of the blood. Excess sugar causes production of excess insulin, which signals cells to take up sugar. Cells then absorb sugar, to get it out of the bloodstream. This solves one problem but creates another: Now the body's cells have too much sugar. To correct this imbalance, cells turn the sugar into saturated fats and cholesterol. This brings us to heart disease.

In terms of heart disease, eating sugar is similar to eating saturated fat, only much worse because sugar creates a lot of other problems. Increased insulin levels not only tell the body to store fat, but they also tell it not to release fat. This makes people get fat and stay fat. It causes fat to be deposited in our cells and organs, resulting in atherosclerosis, fatty liver and kidneys, and obesity. These fats cause blood cells to become sticky thereby increasing the chances of blood clots, strokes and heart attacks. Sugar increases "bad" LDL cholesterol, decreases "good" HDL cholesterol, and increases triglyceride levels in the blood. If antioxidant vitamins and minerals are deficient, these triglycerides can be oxidized causing serious health problems. In addition, red blood cells are choked by the saturated fats and this reduces their ability to carry oxygen to our tissues.

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) is another problem caused by sugar consumption. When insulin is secreted into the blood, it makes blood sugar levels fall rapidly. Insulin levels remain high however, so the body continues to take up sugar beyond the point where it needs to. The result is hypoglycemia. Symptoms include weakness, dizziness, crying spells, insomnia, aggression, and depression. Sugar in breakfasts or lunches can cause children to do poorly in school. They become hypoglycemic about 60 minutes after eating sugar and this affects brain function. Many teachers claim that their students are "brain dead" after lunch, and this is why.

Sugar-induced hormone imbalances tax and weaken the immune system to the point where it can no longer defend the body. When insulin causes blood sugar to fall excessively low, the adrenal glands secrete hormones that pump blood sugar back up. Daily consumption of sugar causes an overworked biochemical balancing act resulting in adrenal exhaustion, which in turn decreases the body's ability to respond to future stress. Adrenal exhaustion is now a common problem in the chronically ill. Sugar quadruples adrenaline levels, while increasing both cholesterol and cortisone. Cortisone is known to depress immune function. Studies show that the ability of white cells to destroy harmful bacteria is reduced as sugar consumption rises. This is why children, who eat lots of sugar, are more susceptible to colds, flu, and other infections.

Fiber Deficiency

Humans were designed to derive energy from complex carbohydrates, which are naturally high in fiber. By contrast, a high sugar diet provides calories without the fiber that is essential to human health. Insufficient fiber causes materials to move too slowly through the digestive tract. This can cause constipation, which is a big problem in our society. It also causes waste to remain too long in the colon

where it can serve as food for harmful bacteria, thereby producing gas and toxins, and promoting intestinal inflammation and bloating.

- Fiber has been shown to remove toxic and carcinogenic substances from our bodies.
- Lack of fiber leads to toxic absorption and excessive stress on the liver.
- Fiber binds to hormones like estrogen and removes them from the body. Without fiber, the estrogen may be reabsorbed and excess estrogen is known to cause disease.
- Fiber slows down the rate of sugar entry into the blood stream, so foods like sweet fruits are suitable and healthy alternatives to refined sugar.
- Fiber has been shown to improve diabetes control because high fiber diets greatly reduce the need for insulin.

Conclusive Research

- Human volunteers who were fed sugar experienced a rise in cholesterol levels plus a marked increase in blood pressure.
- Laboratory animals died sooner when sugar was added to their diet.
- Rats fed a high sugar diet did less physical work, were unable to reproduce as well, and had shortened life spans.
- Other animal experiments concluded that refined sugar "causes serious disturbances in carbohydrate and lipid metabolism," and caused diabetes in the animals.
- People who have little contact with refined sugar have virtually no tooth decay.
- The saturated fats produced by sugar metabolism cause pimples, acne, senility, and heart disease.
- A high sugar diet increases the severity of premenstrual syndromes in college women.
- Sugar feeds cancer cells causing them to grow faster and has been linked to colon, kidney, prostate, breast, rectal, ovarian, uterine, and nervous system cancer.

In our society, staying away from refined sugar is no easy task. Sugar is added to most processed foods and many food labels list sugar under more than one name. This can be confusing to the consumer. Look for sugar under names like sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, maltodextrin, raw sugar, brown sugar, turbinado sugar, honey, rice syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, concentrated fruit juice, and barley malt. Sugar in whole fruits is acceptable, but not so in fruit juices because the lack of fiber allows rapid absorption of the sugar.

Deficiency and toxicity are the two causes of disease, and sugar is a leading contributor to both. This is why sugar is a major cause of our modern epidemic of chronic, degenerative diseases. Read labels carefully and avoid sugar as much as possible. Most especially, don't feed sugar to children. The dangers of eating sugar were even known to the ancient world. In the Bible, Proverbs 25:27 says, "It is not good to eat too much honey." We seem to have forgotten this ancient wisdom.

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