



SUGAR

Sugar consumption in the U.S. has been increasing. On average we eat 153 lbs. of sugar annually per person, up from about 113lbs. in 1966. Sugars are highly addictive, high in calories and low in nutrition. Research has also associated sugar with hyperactivity, behavioral problems and lack of attention.

There are a variety of sweeteners available in markets today and much confusion surrounds them.

1. High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) – HFCS is made from corn. According to Marion Nestle, “Corn syrup starts out as cornstarch. Starch...is a complicated gel-like carbohydrate molecule ...So chemists treat cornstarch with enzymes to break the gel into smaller and smaller pieces. This process end up as corn syrup...To make it sweeter, chemists treat corn syrup with other enzymes to convert some of its glucose to fructose...You metabolize fructose somewhat differently than glucose, leading some scientists to believe that fructose and, therefore, high fructose corn syrup, is the culprit in rising rates of obesity.” (What to Eat, Marion Nestle)
2. Cane Sugar – Cane sugar (also evaporated cane juice) is made by refining raw cane into sugar. Sally Fallon notes, “Refining strips foods of vital nutrients while concentrating sugars, thus allowing us to fulfill our body’s energy requirements without obtaining the nutrients needed for bodybuilding, digestion and repair.” (Nourishing Traditions, Sally Fallon)
3. Artificial Sweeteners – artificial sweeteners such as Nutrasweet, Equal have been shown to contain neurotoxins which affect brain function, and cause autoimmune diseases and cancer.
4. Agave Nectar and Stevia – both of these natural sweeteners are said to have originated in Latin America and are made of plant extracts. Due to increasing demand for agave nectar, current processing methods have likened agave nectar to high fructose corn syrup. Research is still out on Stevia, though how it goes from a plant to a fine white powder would indicate that it undergoes quite some processing.

When using sweeteners, it is best to use natural sweeteners that have only been slightly processed, such as:

1. Maple Syrup and Maple Sugar
2. Date Sugar
3. Rapadura – dehydrated cane sugar juice
4. Honey

For More Information, Check out:

Food and Healing by Annemarie Colbin

Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon

What To Eat by Marion Nestle