

The sugar disease

Business



Would you ever give someone you love poison? Giving someone food containing added sugar is basically the same thing, yet people unknowingly consume large amounts of it all of the time. The consumption of added sugar has greatly increased in the U. S. over the past few years, 30% over the course of 30 years to be exact (Turner 2014), even though consuming so much is very detrimental to one's health. The large consumption is one of the leading causes to many of the health problems Americans face today, including obesity. Obesity is a major problem in the U.

S., with 70. 7% of Americans considered to be overweight or obese (National Center for Health Statistics 2016). Added sugar is not needed and there are no health benefits, yet we consume it so frequently that most Americans are addicted. Americans as a whole need to greatly reduce their added sugar intake in order to avoid damaging their bodies even more than they already have. Added sugar is horrible for the human body, yet it is an ingredient in most foods.

Sugar is a simple carbohydrate that provides calories for your body to use as energy; there is no other nutritional value (American Academy of Family Physicians 2015). Added sugar is when companies add either natural or processed sugar to their product to improve the flavor or texture, prevent certain things from spoiling, keep baked goods fresh longer, and to help fermentation in breads and alcohol (American Academy of Family Physicians 2015). The biggest sources of added sugar in our diets are sodas, sugars, candy, cakes, cookies, pies, fruit juices, dairy desserts, milk products, and some grains. These are perceived to be unhealthy so one would expect them to contain a lot of sugar. However, it is also in many foods one would not

expect it to be. For example, one breakfast bar advertising “ real fruit” and “ whole grains” contains 15 grams of sugar, most of which was added, and a leading brand of yogurt contains 7 teaspoons of in just 1 serving, most of which was added (UCSF SugarScience).

Most Americans aren't aware of how much sugar is actually in non-junk foods and consume a lot of it because of that. Also, many Americans have been trying to eat healthier by cutting out carbs and fat, when the real problem is added sugar. They hardly ever think to cut that out as well. Consuming the large amount of sugar that lots of Americans do, is very unhealthy and is directly linked to obesity, heart issues, metabolic issues, type 2 diabetes, and tooth decay (American Academy of Family Physicians 2015). Humans do not need that much sugar, especially added sugar, in order to live and function normally, yet it is in practically everything. Consuming sugar will only give someone a temporary energy boost, and any excess is converted into fat.

Sugar just provides empty calories that Americans do not need to consume. For example, one 12-ounce can of soda contains 132.5 calories from added sugar alone, with zero nutrition (American Heart Association (Added Sugars) 2016). That is almost seven percent of the recommended calories that one should have in a day from just one can of soda! However, it is very hard to avoid added sugar, considering it is in 74% of the packaged food sold in supermarkets (UCSF SugarScience). Companies also try to be discrete about how much sugar their product contains by labeling it as different things.

In fact, there are more than 61 different names that sugar is referred to on food labels. If you don't know that ingredient is actually a form of sugar, you will eat it easily. For example, one cup of a bran cereal with raisins that advertises "no high-fructose corn syrup" still has 20 grams of sugar in it (UCSF SugarScience). With added sugar present in so many food products, Americans consume way more than the healthy amount. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons a day for females and 9 teaspoons a day for males (American Heart Association (Added Sugars) 2016).

However, the average American female consumes over 15 teaspoons per day and the average American male consumes over 21 teaspoons per day (American Academy of Family Physicians 2015). In fact, the average adult in the U. S. consumes 66 pounds of sugar per year even though there are so many negative effects of over-consumption of sugar. One of the most common sugars that Americans consume is fructose.

Fructose in fruit is a natural, good sugar that is enclosed in fiber which greatly affects the way it is metabolized in our bodies. The fiber helps to slow down the absorption and so it doesn't get fast, direct access to the liver like it does when it is used as an added sugar and is free from the fiber enclosing (sugarfilm 2015). Fructose is the worst sugar someone can have, yet it accounts for about 10. 2% of an American's daily caloric intake and most of the fructose is consumed as sugar-sweetened beverages, grains, and fruit juices (U. S.

National Library of Medicine). Consumption of high fructose corn syrup, the most common form of added fructose, has increased by more than 1000% over the past twenty years (Bray, Nielson and Popkin 2004), which directly connects with the rising obesity epidemic. It is the most dangerous kind of sugar because the human body metabolizes it differently than it does other types; it is metabolized to produce abdominal fat, which is linked to heart issues, and is a common problem of the American people. Fructose is also highly addictive so one constantly craves it and it is less hunger-satisfying so people often consume more of it than they should. Many people may argue that instead of just eating less sweets and sugar, we can just use artificial sweeteners and diet products. However, fake sugars aren't any better than real ones and can actually be worse.

Yes, artificial sweeteners have less calories and no sugar, but some (like sucralose and aspartame) are linked to certain cancers and health disorders. We also don't know the effect that these chemically created products will have on our bodies in, say, 50 years because they have not been around long enough for us to know. Sugar on the other hand, we do know the effects of, so it seems like less of a risk to consume sugar than to consume artificial sweeteners and diet products, as long as you have it in moderation. One could also argue that sugar in our food is beneficial; it makes the food sweeter and taste better, therefore it appeals to a wider range of people, including children. Adding sugar to otherwise healthy food will get more children to eat the healthy food.

While that is true, by doing this we are exposing children to large amounts of sugar at a very young age making it a lot easier for them to become

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addicted and therefore face many health problems once they are older. All in all, sugar is very bad for one's health and is directly tied to the weight gain and health issues that are becoming more and more of an issue in the U. S. Americans consume way more sugar than is healthy and really need to reduce their consumption of it. Doing this will help the many Americans that are overweight, reduce their weight and improve their health situation.

While it is okay to consume added sugar every once in a while and in moderation, consuming it at the rate Americans are is very, very bad for one's health. However, artificial sweeteners are no better and we should not just switch to those instead. People need to look for products low in added sugar, while still avoiding artificial sweeteners. Many people already know that sugar is bad for you, but most do not know how dangerous and severe the effects of added sugar actually are. We as a society need to become more aware of the danger and commonality of added sugar in our food.

After all, would you ever give someone you love poison? Then why would you give them added sugar? Bibliography" Added Sugar: What You Need To Know." Added Sugar: What You Need To Know. AmericanAcademy of Family Physicians, Mar. 2015. Web. 27 Apr.

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