

# Added sugar in diets has created public health crisis

13 April 2015, by Ann Blackford

Sugar tastes good and for a little while, it may make us feel better until the crash comes and we are left feeling tired and lifeless. It is estimated that Americans consume 130 pounds of sugar per person a year which is about a third of a pound of sugar a day.

We consume it in all the obvious places like candy, cookies, pastries and ice cream but [sugar](#), made of [glucose](#) and [fructose](#), can sneak into our diets under the guise of foods we may not suspect, like crackers, processed foods, peanut butter, yogurt, sauces and bread, many of which use high fructose corn syrup, a man-made sweetener equally as toxic as sugar.

Recent medical research concludes consumption of added sugar in our diet has plunged America into a public health crisis. Sugar can be directly linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Children are becoming obese and diabetic and at an earlier age, and sugar along with [high fructose corn syrup](#), more than any other substances are to blame.

Table sugar is composed of glucose and fructose. Glucose it is quickly absorbed from the walls of your small intestine, triggering your pancreas to secrete insulin, a hormone that delivers glucose from your blood stream to your cells to be used as energy or stored as glycogen or fat. Consistently high sugar loads can lead to insulin resistance leaving [high blood glucose](#) in circulation. The [high glucose](#) will attach to red blood cells, which is used to determine if you are diabetic or prediabetic

Fructose is also absorbed through your small intestine into the bloodstream, which delivers fructose straight to your liver. Unlike glucose the metabolism of fructose is not as well regulated and the liver is easily overwhelmed and over time, excess fructose can prompt globules of fat to grow throughout the liver, the precursor to nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. It spurs the production of

triglycerides, a type of fat that can migrate from the liver to the arteries, raising your risk for heart attack or stroke. Glucose and fructose can overwhelm your pancreas which can result in total-body inflammation that, in turn, puts you at even higher risk for obesity and diabetes.

While the facts are sobering, the good news is that the majority of these illnesses are preventable.

The first step is to become more mindful before we reach for the next soda, cookie or piece of cake. Paying attention to the sugar content on nutrition labels and making healthy choices for both adults and children are the first steps to better health.

Some common foods to avoid that have a high sugar content are:

Regular sodas - 136 added sugar calories/12 fl oz; Juice cocktails such as Capri-Sun, Tropicana Orange Ade – 85 added sugar calories/8 fl oz; 100 percent Natural Wholegrain Cereal with raisins, lowfat – 81 added sugar calories/cup; Honey Mustard Salad Dressing – 25 added sugar calories/teaspoon, Heart Healthy 100 percent Whole Wheat Bread – 12 calories added sugar calories/slice; High Protein Bars – 34 calories added sugar/bar; Milk Chocolate Bars – 74 calories added sugar/bar; Yogurt, fruit and nuts, low fat – 89 calories added sugar /6 oz; and Ice cream, fat free, and chocolate – 83 calories added sugar/medium scoop.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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