

Sugar and Spice, *not* all things nice!

By Nutritional Therapist, Heidi du Preez

Dr William Martin was first to publicly label sucrose (sugar) a poison. Martin's definition came about after he determined the classical definition of a poison as "... *any substance applied to the body, which causes or may cause disease.*"

Sugar contained in natural, wholefoods is easily metabolised and utilised by the body. Nature has ensured that fructose, for instance, obtained when we consume unprocessed fruits (wholefoods), has the necessary enzymes, vitamins and minerals accompanying it to allow this type of simple carbohydrate to be converted efficiently into glucose (blood sugar) and fully metabolised by our bodies for energy.

To the contrary, refined sugar, or sucrose, is manufactured from cane and beet extract, which has had its enzymes, vitamins and minerals removed to leave a white, crystalline substance devoid of any nutritional content, only offering empty calories. Because refined sugar has no accompanying vitamins and minerals and no nutritive value, it leaches valuable vitamins and minerals from the body to complete the assimilation processes, resulting in the following conditions:

- **Immune system** - sugar suppresses the immune system, making one more susceptible to infection, colds and flu. It is also mucous forming, so can exacerbate sinus infections, runny noses, ear infections and other respiratory or digestive problems.
- **Hyperactivity** – sucrose robs minerals and the B-vitamins, impairs brain function, resulting in increased emotional instability, crankiness, concentration difficulties, hyperactivity and violence. ADD, ADHD, autism, concentration and other behavioural problems have been linked to excessive sugar consumption.
- **Obesity** - cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity result from increased use of refined sugars. The huge worldwide increase in heart disease increases in rough proportion to the increase in sugar consumption, and not fat consumption.
- **Micro-organisms and cancer** - all refined sugars are parasitic. Yeasts, moulds and other bacteria feeds on sugar and even cancer cells proliferate in a sugar rich environment!
- **Other diseases** - sugar can cause appendicitis, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, increase the risk of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and can exacerbate the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Excess sugar consumption has also been linked to Parkinson's, Alzheimer's disease, varicose veins and don't forget the rotten teeth!
- **Aging** - free radicals, and thus sugar, are the most significant factor that accelerates ageing.

Food companies have doubled the amount of sugar they add to many of their processed products. Processed meats, soups, yoghurts, breakfast cereals, and other foods have been heavily sweetened to attract more customers. Some breakfast cereals contain up to 14g of sugar per serving, which is 5g more than the sugar content of a jam doughnut. A soda drink can contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar. Read the labels! Also look out for hidden refined sugar like glucose or corn syrups, fructose, maltose, dextrose and starch. Think twice before you pack that energy bar or sugar-laden soda drink into your child's lunch box!

The best way to sweeten up your life is to use wholefoods, like raw honey, dates, raisins, fruits and natural sweeteners like Stevia and Luo Han Guo. However, the best is still to trade in your sweet tooth for one that will appreciate only the delicate taste of natural wholefoods.

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