

Sweeteners

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We all seem to love the taste of sweet things which could be why sugar has become such a big addiction. Eating sugar triggers the natural production of opioids and dopamine in the reward center of the brain. These hormones aid in relieving pain and help you to feel good. When the hormones are unbalanced, the body has cravings and sugar is what most people turn to. Too much sugar can have detrimental effects on your health. There is an increased risk of disease and sickness, rapid weight gain, nutrient imbalance or deficiency, bodily impairments and behavioral changes just to name a few of the basics.

Sweet whole foods are a natural energy boost that is meant to compliment a diet. However, in



modern times the sweets that most people turn to are much more concentrated and overwhelming to the system. These sweets create that initial sugar high only to leave you with a crash several moments later. Over the years sugar consumption, per person, has grown to a whopping 150 - 170 pounds of sugar per year, which is 30 - 60 teaspoons a day. That is ¼ -½ a pound of sugar, per person, per day!! Our bodies can only handle about a

teaspoon a day. It has gotten way out of control and sugar is in most everything we buy. If your purchase comes in a package 9 times out of 10 there will be some form of sugar in it.

We want life to be sweet, so which sweeteners do we choose? Here is a breakdown of a few sweeteners to help us be a little smarter in our choices:

Artificial Sweeteners: a.k.a. NutraSweet, Sweet 'n' Low, Equal, Aspartame, Sucralose, Splenda, Maltodextrin...and many more. Artificial sweeteners are just as the name indicates, artificial. These sweeteners are either chemically isolated compounds or something that has been created in a laboratory. Artificial sweeteners are not meant for the body and should be avoided like the plague.

Corn Syrup, High Fructose Corn Syrup: This is a very concentrated, highly processed substance that confuses the body on many levels. It is best to be avoided at all costs. It is a "hyper-sugar" that spikes the blood sugar more quickly than any other sweetener.

Refined sugar: a.k.a. cane sugar, table sugar and white sugar. This is derived from a plant but it has been refined from all of its natural components. The body can eventually process it out,

however it tends to starve and rob the body of needed nutrition and feed cancer cells, candida, diabetes, obesity and so much more that is toxic to your health.

Fructose: Most fructose is derived from refined cornstarch and does not contain any original natural components. It is hard for the body to breakdown and eliminate. Fructose is the sugar found in fruit yet it is almost impossible to obtain natural fructose that is derived from fruit. So you might as well use the fruit....bananas make a great sweetener.

Brown sugar, Turbinado, Demerara sugar: These are all refined sugars. They contain or are sprayed with molasses which gives them a different flavor and appearance and a *slightly* richer nutritional profile than white sugar.

Organic sugar: By law when something is labeled “organic” no chemicals can be used to process it so it is minimally refined. Enough minerals stay intact that it can be broken down by the liver and turned into glucose for release later. If consumed in large quantities it will acidify the blood and make you bodily fluids gooey and thick.

Molasses, Pure Maple Syrup, Rice Malt, Sorghum, and Barley Malt Syrup: These sweeteners are made from whole foods that have been reduced by heat to a syrup consistency. They are rich in minerals and can ride through the bloodstream easily. Maple syrup is superior to the other syrups because of the nature of tree saps which are more resilient to heat and high temperatures.

Sucanat: It is dehydrated sugar cane juice. Some of the fiber and most of the minerals are still intact in the raw version of this sugar. Sucanat contains less sucrose therefore making it easier for the body to digest and it won't leave you with the sugar high or other sugar problems.

Stevia: This plant has been around for over 1500 years and can be an ideal sweetener. Make sure you use an extract of the stevia leaf or the leaf itself. The white powder that is commonly sold is processed and does not contain the nutritional value of the plant or extract. It is hundreds times sweeter than sugar with no calories. Some people feel this has a bitter aftertaste.

Agave: This is getting a lot of press lately. Some people are saying it isn't as good as it is made out to be, yet not all agave is processed the same way. Know what you are buying. Raw agave is an enzyme-rich sweetener with all its minerals and one the body can break down. Highly processed agave can be as bad as corn syrup.

Xylitol: This is another sweetener with some controversy around it. Again, the amount of processing determines if you get a good product or not. This is a sugar alcohol that is naturally found in the fibers of many plants. It doesn't spike the blood sugar and it also has some benefit for fighting tooth decay.

Raw Honey: Many call this nature's perfect sweetener. It is enzyme rich with all its minerals and easy to digest. Honey loses some of the enzyme rich benefits when cooked.

Raisin or Date paste: Using dried fruit is another perfect sweetener because it comes from a whole food. It is as nature intended: full of flavor, vitamins and minerals and natural sweetness. Dates naturally crystallize as they dry in the sun. When they are ground into a powder you get date sugar.

Coconut (Palm) Sugar: This is made from coconut palm tree sap and similar to sucanat in nutritional content.

**No matter what form of sugar you are using, be aware of your consumption.
Less is more in this case.**

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