



HOW SWEET IT IS!

Sugar is the most popular food additive in the United States. It is used to make cakes, candies, cookies and other sweets. But did you know it is also in catsup, crackers, bread, soups, cereals, peanut butter, cured



meats and salad dressings?

Every day, American children eat an average of about 12 teaspoons of table sugar and sweeteners. That's 180 calories! Sugar and sweetened products *can* fit into a healthful eating plan—if you choose the majority of your foods from complex carbohydrates, like breads, cereals, pasta and rice. Add fruits and vegetables for greater variety.

- One teaspoon of white sugar has 15 calories; one teaspoon of corn syrup has 20 calories.
- One can of soda pop has 11 teaspoons of sugar. School-age children drink about 17 ounces of soda pop a day—or about 15 teaspoons of sugar. Children under five years of age should be offered healthier beverages, like milk or juice. Water should also be a choice.

- Sugar goes by many names, so reading the label is important. All of the following sweeteners provide little nutritional value—except for calories: dextrose, maltose, fructose, lactose, sucrose, corn sweetener, honey, fruit juice concentrate, sorbitol, brown sugar, corn syrup and molasses.
- One-half cup of Jell-O® contains the same amount of sugar as one Pop-Tart®.

Sugar's Role in Health

Some chronic diseases may be related to eating too much sugar.

- Studies have shown that the amount of **tooth decay** is related to *how often sugar is eaten*. Either brush after meals and snacks, or rinse out your mouth with water.
- **Diabetes is not** caused by eating too much sugar. But sugar and sugary foods can aggravate poor blood sugar control.

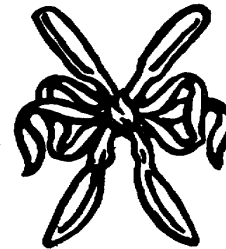
- **Obesity or overweight cannot** be blamed on sugar alone; but is the result of too many calories. Physical activity can help burn extra calories. Children and adolescents need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Sweets should never be given as a reward.
- **High triglycerides** are a risk factor for heart disease. Restricting sugar is frequently part of the treatment for high triglycerides. Treatment also includes weight control, exercise, and fat and cholesterol-restriction.
- Studies have shown **NO** relationship between sugar consumption and **hyperactivity and mood changes**. Although sugar has been blamed for causing criminal behavior and hyperactivity in children, research does not support this claim. Sugar often accompanies a party or celebration where children may be overly excited anyway.

Sweets don't have to be avoided completely. If children still crave sweets, choose small portions of their favorite treat. Or, use artificially-sweetened puddings, gelatins or yogurt in moderation. For a real change, add fresh fruit to desserts, salads and cereals, or offer fruit as snacks. Fruit gives children the sweetness they crave and lots of vitamins, minerals and fiber, too.

References

- The American Dietetic Association's *Complete Food & Nutrition Guide*, 1996.
- The Sugar Association, Inc., *Lifting the Lid on the Sugar Bowl*, 1994.

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