

The Scary Details About Corn Syrup

June 30, 2006 ~ The Daily Planet ~ Telluride, CO

Lynn Mayer, MA, CNC

Here is a little corn syrup knowledge for you. Corn refining began about the time of the civil war. Starch was its first product and the laundry business its biggest consumer. Since then, a variety of acid and enzyme treatments have been used to further convert this cornstarch into a variety of artificial “sugars” – dextrose, glucose, corn sugar, corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup.

All of the vitamin and mineral factors that originally existed in the corn are destroyed in this synthesis. That they be called “corn” sugars was considered fraudulent by Dr. Wiley, the country’s first head of what was to become the Food and Drug Administration. His concern was that the public would consider these corn sugars as “natural”. Instead, they are synthetic sugars, ones that do not exist in nature.

The country’s original sugar consumption has been from sugarcane and beets. Although vitamins and minerals are lost in their refining process as well, the sugar molecule itself is not changed.

Tests done in the early 1900’s demonstrated that the artificial glucose made from cornstarch over- stimulated the pancreas. The result was low blood sugar as well as diabetes. Dr. Wiley tried his best without success to have corn sugars banned due to this connection to diabetes.

The disruption that corn sugars caused in blood sugar was also shown to contribute to a predisposition to heart disease, lassitude, brain fatigue, high blood pressure, overweight, irritability, mental depression and impairment in calcium absorption. This list reads very similarly to that which my client’s have noted when they come to me. They are our current health dilemmas.

Due to the fact that corn sugars are cheaper to produce, they are used by the food industry in increasing quantities in place of cane and beet sugars. One look at food labels and one can see how these synthetic sugars have infiltrated baked goods, soft drinks, candies, ice cream and juices. They are even used to sweeten health touted “power bars”. These sugars are pervasive.

One lecturer on the harmful effects of corn sugars was Dr. Royal Lee. As a researcher in nutrition, he too warned of an anticipated rise in diabetes due to the confusing nature of these synthetic sugars on the body. I have a collection of Dr. Lee’s lectures from the 1950’s. It astounds me every time that I listen to them that they were recorded when I was a toddler. Here it is some fifty years later and the public is still in the dark.

Today's nutritional concern is the dramatic rise in obesity since 1980. It is not mere coincidence that the latest, even less expensive corn sugar - high fructose corn syrup - flooded our food supply at that same time. In a lead article in the April 2004 American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers noted the consumption of high-fructose corn sweeteners increased more than 1,000 percent between 1970 and 1990.

Some of the reasons pointed to in the connection to obesity are that: 1) fructose is metabolized very differently in the body, converting to fat more readily than any other sugar and 2) fructose does not stimulate insulin secretion, nor does it enhance the hormone leptin, both involved in appetite regulation. The end result is that our bodies are tricked into wanting to eat more while at the same time storing more fat.

The fructose in high fructose corn syrup also does not contain any enzymes, vitamins or minerals. These micronutrients are needed for fructose assimilation. With the nutrients missing, the body must then rob its own stores of the nutrients to process the fake sugar. The body is further nutritionally depleted as a result.

The natural fructose that is in fruit contains not only the enzymes, vitamins and minerals necessary for fructose assimilation, but fiber to slow down the digestive process. The body handles moderate fruit intake with ease. When we consume fructose as a synthetic concentrated liquid, it puts tremendous strain on the blood sugar balancing system of our body.

I have seen some remarkable healing responses occur when corn and its processed sugars have been identified as irritants to the body. One young woman here in town has found freedom from emotional outbursts now that corn starch, corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup have been eliminated from her diet.

The food industry will change when we take it upon ourselves to become educated and vote accordingly with our dollars. Read your labels carefully. Choose those foods that do not contain corn sugars and corn syrups. Better choices for sweeteners are sweeteners such as honey, real maple syrup, molasses, Sucanat, Stevia and date syrup. They may be more expensive, but a bargain compared to the price of obesity and diabetes.

Lynn Mayer is a Certified Nutrition Consultant and Health Coach here in Telluride, Colorado. Lynn is available for consultation in person, by phone 970 369-4790 or through her website www.thejoyofhealth.com