



WHAT IS 'SUGAR'?

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How often have you heard someone say "Sugar isn't good for you!" Or maybe you've been told you have a 'yeast' infection because there is too much sugar fermenting in your gut. Or, you're somewhat worried as you approach those danger years when diabetes and other metabolic disorders become more common. Yet, when you consider your own diet, it doesn't seem to have much sugar in it.

The word 'sugar' is nowadays often used as a short-hand term to refer to foods that are sweet AND to foods that aren't sweet but *behave like sugar during digestion*. The last part is why a person who doesn't eat much in the way of actual sugar can still have too much 'sugar' circulating in their body.

Sugar is not 'bad.' One form of sugar, called glucose, is what your body--and especially your brain--uses for fuel. You *must* have glucose to live. Your body makes glucose out of the foods you eat—especially out of the carbohydrates and the protein. If those foods take a while to break down—if you use whole grains and fibrous fruits and vegetables, eggs, fish and meats--their natural sugar content is not likely to harm you because it enters your circulation slowly. The problems mount if you depend on stimulants, sweets, and 'white foods' like potatoes and refined grain foods for energy. Their rapid digestion floods the system with sugar, and eventually overwhelms your sugar-digesting mechanisms.

To take care of this problem—to avoid metabolic disorders like hypoglycemia and diabetes—you can take several steps:

1. Consult an acupuncturist/nutritionist for guidance on changing your diet to feature more foods that do not digest rapidly into sugars, and to improve the quality of your gut bacteria with probiotics and anti-yeast products. In my office I also offer enzymes to supplement the losses that occur with age and overuse of high-glycemic foods.
2. Put yourself (and your whole family, especially the children) on a "low-glycemic" diet—that is, one that does not expose your body to lots of rapidly digested sugars. Read more about this on the internet. Basically, it means you eat more nuts and seeds, berries, leafy & raw fresh vegetables, eggs,

meats, fish and cheeses, oils and butter...and also controlled amounts of whole grains, fresh root vegetables and sweet fruits.

To end my answer to the question "what is 'sugar?'" I'm going to list foods that provide the simple sugars you are best advised to avoid. These foods hype up your metabolism and finally wear you out. Yes, there are a lot here that are part of the 'ordinary' American diet. And that is a big reason why we Americans are fighting epidemics of obesity and metabolic digestive disease. So, to protect yourself and your family, markedly reduce your use of these foods:

- white sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, cactus syrup...
- sodas, fruit juices, dried fruit, canned fruit in syrup
- white potatoes in any form, including fried, and chips
- white rice, white pasta, white bread, breakfast cereals especially the kind with sugar on them, white corn products including tortilla chips
- sweetened yogurt, ice cream, ice yogurt
- granola bars, 'health' bars, 'protein' bars
- pastries, donuts, cakes, cookies, pies, candy
- alcohol in any form.