

A SHOCKING SURPRISE....

The search for truth about High Fructose Corn Syrup

You've heard the hype....

You've seen the commercials. But what's the truth about high fructose corn syrup? Be it the fact that high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is found in nearly all processed food from sodas and cereals to ketchup and applesauce, I felt the need to know the facts. It's said that the average American consumes nearly 50lbs of the stuff a year. I wondered where it comes from, how it's made and how bad it really is for us.

This is what I found....

HFCS is originally corn starch that is processed into simple sugars through the addition of chemicals and enzymes. The starches are broken down by enzymes to a combination of glucose and fructose (simple sugars). These compounds differ from table sugar (sucrose) in the fact that they don't need to be broken down any further to enter the blood stream. Sucrose on the other hand, must first be broken down in the body by an enzyme called sucrase which the body produces in limited supply. Due to this enzyme's limited production, the amount of table sugar our bodies can convert into sugars that can be absorbed into the bloodstream is also limited. The sugars in HFCS can be absorbed without having to be broken down. Without this limiting factor, the body has less control over how much sugar is absorbed into the blood stream.

What does this mean to us?

It means HFCS has a greater impact on our blood sugar levels than table sugar. Some studies say that this characteristic of HFCS increases the risk of obesity and certain types of diabetes in people who

consume moderate to high levels of HFCS. It's a stick in the spokes for anyone trying to lose weight by increasing their insulin sensitivity, people following eating plans like the South Beach Diet for example.

What's in the mix?

Some of the chemicals and enzymes used to convert the corn starch include caustic soda, hydrochloric acid, alpha-amylase, gluco-amylase, isomerase, powdered carbon, calcium chloride, and magnesium sulfate. According to a peer-reviewed report published by Environmental Health, nearly half of the samples collected from HFCS manufacturers contained mercury. Two chemicals used to control pH levels in the manufacturing of HFCS (caustic soda and hydrochloric acid) were identified as the source of the mercury contamination. Chemicals produced at chlor-alkali plants using mercury cells. In 2003 the EPA reported in the Federal Register that on average approximately seven tons of mercury were missing from chlor-alkali plants in the year 2000. This made me wonder how much of those seven tons of mercury ended up in our food supply.

What's on the shelves?

In a study published in January of 2009 by The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, the institute took foods (mainly marketed to children) with HFCS as a main ingredient and sent them to an independent laboratory to test for mercury. What they found was scary. Nearly one out of three products tested contained mercury.

You heard what they say about it?

I'm never one to believe what I see on TV, but I was at least willing to hear the argument. My first question: who paid for these ads to air all across the country? A national ad campaign is far from cheap. It turns out that the TV commercials and the website they plug are part of a \$20-\$30 million campaign funded by the Corn Refiners Association to combat HFCS's negative public image. The industry making HFCS was footing the bill, which made me question any of the facts they presented. They certainly wouldn't tout any facts that didn't fortify the demand for their product.

The FDA must have something to say....

Well don't look to them to help protect us from the potential harms presented by HFCS. In fact despite these studies the FDA has approved foods that use HFCS to be labeled as "Natural" when not much is farther from the truth. When I think of natural I think of produce from my garden, not sweeteners that were perfected in a laboratory. It seems to me the industry has their claws in the FDA. It seems we need not only to worry about mercury exposure from seafood but also from processed foods containing HFCS. Look at the labels of the food you buy. It's not hard to find foods with HFCS as the main ingredient.

What to do?

We can avoid these foods and send a message to the industry. We can let them know that we will not accept their blatant disregard for our health, for the health of pregnant mothers and our children. We can let them know that we will not be force fed their product or their propaganda, that the people of the United States of America are smart enough to separate fact from fiction. We can write to our political leaders and let them know that we refuse to support any representative who

Sweet Profits

The heavyweight of the sweetener industry, Archer Daniels Midland, has been fighting for profits since the late 70's. Failing to engineer a cheaper substitute for sugar, ADM turned their sights on lawmakers. Some believe AMD to be one of the most politically influential corporations of the 70's.

Their victory came in 1982 when Congress passed a bill, and President Ronald Reagan signed into law, Draconian quotas on sugar importation. Choking off the supply which raises the demand and with it the price of sugar. Suddenly HFCS is the chosen favorite sugar substitute, at least that was the plan and it worked. Immediately after the quotas took effect sugar prices spiked along with the sales of HFCS. ADM has successfully coaxed enough law makers and in turn the market swayed in its favor.

But the sales have seen a decline in recent years. HFCS consumption spiked in 1998 and has been declining since as the public questioned HFCS's link to the growing cases of diabetes and obesity. This concerns companies that make more than half of a trillion dollars from the sale of this product. There is a lot to be lost, hence the ad campaign

Hungry For More?

www.kingcorn.net

www.healthobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=105026

www.ehjournal.net/content/8/1/2

<http://us.macmillan.com/againstthegrain>

is willing to compromise our health for their own political or monetary gain, that the old ways have failed us and we will no longer sit quietly by and accept their decisions that negatively affect the health of American citizens, the health of our children.



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