

Sugar Dangers

When was the last time you went to the store, or to the bakery, or to the restaurant and lulled yourself into that tasty "low fat" dessert. After all, you said, it's low fat. It must be good for me. If only that were true. If the label says "low fat," beware! It means it has to be high in something else, right? I know. They don't tell you that part. So what do you think that food is high in? It's sugar - yes, pure, adulterated sugar.

Here are some basics: If it's processed, it's not very good for you. "Processed" means that the food has hit a machine before it got to you. So if it's in a can or particularly a box, it's processed. And if it's processed, the processing machine ate the good stuff, and gave you sugar, sodium, and enough preservatives for it to last long enough on the shelf that you can buy it and store it.

Sugar comes in many different forms, and most know that if it has -ose, such as sucrose, dextrose, and fructose, it's sugar. There are other sugars that don't have -ose, such as turbinado, maltodextrin, honey, and corn syrup.

It's funny how things have changed. We know that sugar is bad for us. We know we're not supposed to eat it. Now we have a new bad guy, high-fructose corn syrup, which may be even worse than traditional sugar. Now we're (I'm) searching for products with "real sugar," treating that sugar almost as a health food. How silly! What a change in our standards in only a generation.

Someone told me that we need to eat sugar "in moderation." I suppose that's true, except for the fact that our definition of "moderation" has changed so much in such a short period of time. Moderation in our parents' and grandparents' times was a trip to a fast-food joint once a month. They would bake fresh cookies that would last a few days. Now what's the definition of moderation? Do you think our bodies and their ability to assimilate lots of junk food has changed in such a short period of time? Of course not!

Sugar is made to be used quickly. It is easily digested into glucose, which is used by the muscles, providing quick energy. But if you don't use those muscles, if you don't exercise right away, the sugar doesn't just disappear. The liver has to handle it, and it turns the sugar into triglycerides, a component of fat. Triglycerides are directly related to cardiovascular disease, inflammation, diabetes, and a host of chronic degenerative diseases.

We'll talk about the danger of triglycerides in my next column. In the meantime, do something good for yourself besides stopping sugar. Order a good health newsletter. My material for this column comes from one of my favorites, Alternatives, by Dr. David Williams. You can order it at drdavidwilliams.com or call 800-219-8591.