

Added Sweeteners

Do you have a sweet tooth? Most Americans do. In fact the USDA estimates that we consume about 100 pounds of sweeteners/person/per year. Where are all of these sugars coming from? They are added to the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. They come in many different forms, but the two main added sweeteners are sucrose which is refined table sugar and fructose which is mainly used in the controversial form of high-fructose corn syrup. No matter which form they come in we need to watch out for added sugars because they are adding empty calories to our diets and increasing our risks for obesity, type 2 diabetes, calcium deficiency, osteoporosis and cavities.

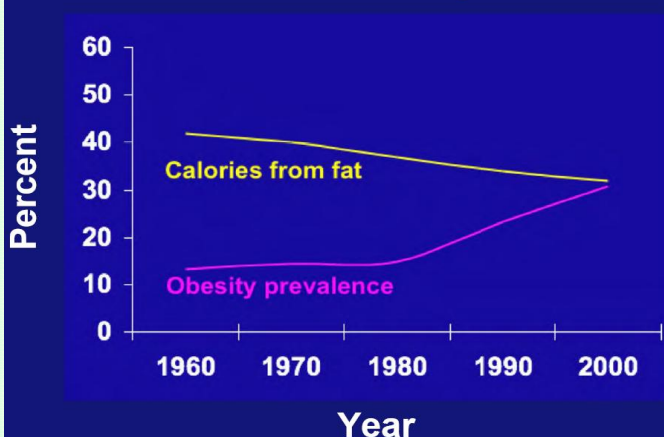


By Aaron Hunt and Rebecca Morley

Added Sugars are energy packed carbohydrates that provide calories but few nutrients. They are found in everything from soft drinks to ketchup. The majority of added sugar intake comes from beverages. We drink sodas, sports drinks, and juice-aids which are packed with added sugars. The average teenage boy drinks 2-12 oz sodas/day or ~700 per year, and the average teenage girl drinks 1.4. 12oz sodas/day or ~500 per year. Soft drink consumption has doubled since 1971 while milk consumption has dropped by 38%. As you can see, despite the fact that fat has decreased since 1960, obesity has increased. The culprit is added sugars!

Sucrose is made up of 50% glucose and 50% fructose. Glucose is the main molecule our body uses for energy. It can be easily metabolized by cells throughout the body. **Fructose**, however, must be metabolized by the liver in order for our cells to use it. **High-Fructose Corn Syrup** is the main added sweetener in the American diet. It has gained notoriety because it is metabolized in the liver where it is more likely to create two types of bad fats: Very low-density lipoproteins triglycerides both of which increase the risk for heart disease. Fructose may also affect the appetite hormones and leptin and ghrelin causing us to overeat.

Prevalence of Obesity Compared to Percent Calories from Fat Among US Adults



Check the ingredient list for these common added sweeteners:

- Sucrose
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrates
- Corn syrup
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Sugar
- Syrup
- Maltose
- Dextrose

Artificial Sweeteners may provide a calorie free alternative but they are not the answer. Overall the FDA has approved the use of many artificial sweeteners but by using them we are feeding the bad habit of craving sweets.

[Click here for graph illustrating per capita sweetener consumption](#)

Sources: www.eatrightmontana.org/ & www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com