



SUGAR-THE SWEET TRUTH DR JEWKES

The body is designed to run on carbohydrates. While we can use protein and fat for energy, the easiest and most “smoke-free” fuel is carbohydrate. When you eat complex carbohydrates like whole grains, vegetables, beans, or lentils, or simpler carbohydrates such as fruit, the body does exactly what it is designed to do. It digests these foods and gradually releases their potential energy. Humans are principally attracted to the taste of carbohydrate-sweetness. It worked well for early man because most things in nature that are sweet are not poisonous.

But we have discovered how to extract the sweetness and leave the rest-bad news for our nutrition. All form of concentrated sugar-white sugar, brown sugar, malt, glucose, honey, and syrup-are fast releasing, causing a rapid increase in blood sugar levels. If this sugar is not required by the body, it is put into storage, eventually emerging as fat. Most concentrated forms of sugar are also devoid of vitamins and minerals, unlike the natural sources such as fruit. White sugar has around 90 percent of its vitamins and minerals removed. Without vitamins and minerals our metabolism becomes inefficient, contributing to poor energy and poor weight control.

Fruit contains a simple sugar called fructose, which needs no digesting and can enter the bloodstream quickly, like glucose or sucrose. The body cannot use fructose as it is, since cells run only on glucose. As a result, the fructose first has to be converted by body into glucose, which effectively slows down this sugar’s effect on the metabolism. (Note the carbohydrate family chart)

Keeping your blood sugar balanced is probably the most important factor in maintain even energy levels and weight. The level of glucose in your blood largely determines your appetite. When the level drops, you feel hungry. The glucose in your bloodstream is available to you cells to make energy. When the levels are too high, the body converts the excess to glycogen (a short-term fuel store mainly in the liver and muscle cells) or fat, our long-term energy reserve. When blood glucose levels are too low, we experience a whole host of symptoms including fatigue, poor concentration, irritability, nervousness, depression, sweating, headaches, and digestive problems. The result of these blood sugar highs and lows is that we become increasingly fat and lethargic. If you can control your blood sugar levels, the result is even weight and constant energy.

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Sources: American Diabetic Association
Journal of Complimentary Medicine
Centers of Disease Control
Academy of Nutrition