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Published by Anonymous on Feb. 02, 1993

Sugar Part 2

No Good for You

Devananda, Tandavan Sugar's effect on our well being is a very controversial subject. Any of the following symptoms may be related to a high simple sugar intake: anxiety, bed-wetting, tooth decay, depression, diabetes, poor immune response, perspiration, fainting, fatigue, heart disease, hypoglycemia, insomnia, memory loss, obesity, osteoporosis, seizures, skin rashes, itching, rapid heart beat, hoarseness, vaginal itching, weakness, marked irritability and many others. The causal relationship of these symptoms is rather complex. For instance, a high intake of sugars will produce an elevation of insulin secretion. If the sugar is not all utilized, the insulin will help convert some of the sugar to fats which then are deposited in the arteries, especially the small arteries of the heart.

Those people who eat a lot of sweet foods tend to overeat, as the sugars do not satisfy the appetite as well as the more complex carbohydrates. That is, they do not fill us. Since it takes the B vitamins to help metabolize the sugars, these are taken from the stored quantities, which can easily be depleted. Both of these then tend to produce not just obesity but hypertension and heart problems. It has been shown that excess dietary sugar will deplete the stores of copper in the body. There is also a disruption of the calcium/phosphorous ratio resulting in some degree of bone absorption. Reactive hypoglycemia, the result of sudden increase in blood sugar levels, will manifest as the many psychological types of symptoms mentioned above. This is the most easily treated conditions - one merely needs to lower the intake of sugars and increase the intake of complex carbohydrates accompanied by high fiber and low protein foods.

The biggest hazard to our dietary efficiency is processed foods, for it is very easy to obtain sugars in these without its presence being obvious. Who would think that tomato catsup is high in sugar? Sugar and salt are both the unsuspected offenders in most processed foods. It is absolutely essential, for health's sake, to become a

label reader. Of course, it is not only the hidden sweets that are empty calories. The blood sugar may rise higher and more rapidly with a large serving of processed potatoes (starch is a form of sugar) than ice cream. Need I remind you that the worst offender in ice cream is the butter fat and the dairy origin of the fat?

It is possible that over 75% of all sugar intake is hidden in the processed foods that are advertised so highly in the media. This is the first thing one should eliminate in reducing dietary sugar. If we could eliminate all hidden sources, we could then control our intake and keep it within the reasonable limit of less than 10% of all ingested calories.

We have said that the ideal energy source in our diet is the complex carbohydrates from whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The complex molecules made up of long chains of sucrose molecules, and accompanied by other nutrients, are digested more slowly so that the sudden rise in blood sugar level does not occur. They are often accompanied by fiber which tends - by its bulk alone - to fill us to a satisfactory level, without the see-saw effect of the blood sugar level.

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