

Compiled from an article by Health Food Expert NAINI SETALVAD -

Sugar is not so sweet after all. It is common knowledge that it is responsible for more than half the diseases we have today. And yet, we are eating it for almost every meal — breakfast, lunch, dinner and as in between meals too! From bread, biscuits, ketchup, pickles, packaged drinks, chikkis, cereal, readymade meals and sauces to the obvious ones like cakes, jams, canned fruit — sugar is almost omnipresent.

GLUCOSE AND SUGAR

The human system needs fuel (glucose) to function. One of the main functions of our body is to convert the food we eat into glucose through a series of essential biochemical actions with the help of enzymes. Glucose is present in nature in fruits, vegetables, sprouts, grains and is a very important nutrient needed by the body. Unfortunately, glucose which is a very important ingredient for our body is confused with refined sugar. We do not need the refined sugar and our body cannot handle it. It gets into our body almost like a storm! It stresses our body and throws off the body's homeostasis; excess sugar may result in a number of other significant consequences. Sugars increase our body's production of adrenaline by four times, which puts the body into a state of 'fight or flight' stress, without anything to fight or flee from, except the consumption of sugar. This stress reaction increases the production of both cholesterol and cortisone. Cortisone inhibits immune function.

Our body does not recognise this ingredient and all organs from the pancreas to the liver work overtime in order to assimilate it. Table sugar is so refined and concentrated, that it is a pure drug and equally addictive and is a slow killer.

THE PROCESS

During the refining process, 64 food elements are destroyed in sugar. All the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids and fiber are gone, leaving only empty, non-nutritious, harmful sucrose. It has virtually nothing of value.

Nanofiltration is used to decolorise sugar juice or syrup which has serious consequences on our hormones.

Sugar drains the body of precious vitamins and minerals, as it puts the body under a great strain for its digestion, detoxification and elimination.

WHY THE BAD NAME

White sugar or refined table sugar is devoid of any vitamins, minerals or fibre; the refining process destroys all its essentials. It negatively impacts the body's energy production processes and is insidious. It comes under the category of disaccharides and is chemically known as sucrose.

Studies have proven that sugar disturbs the calcium phosphorous balance more than any other single factor, just as eating sugar robs the body of its vitamin B — thiamine. Vitamin B deficiency is a phenomenon of recent occurrence, dating from the time when industrial processing of foods began on a big scale.

HEALTH EFFECTS

- Excess sugar contributes to obesity — is taken to every part of the body and stored in the most inactive areas: the belly, the buttocks, the breasts and the thighs. When these

are completely filled, fatty acids are then distributed among the heart and kidneys

- Raises blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Our body's tolerance and immunizing power becomes more limited, so we cannot respond properly to extreme attacks, whether they are cold, heat, mosquitoes or microbes
- Sugar taken every day produces a continuously over acid condition requiring many minerals and vitamins from deep in the body to rectify the imbalance.
- In order to protect the blood, much calcium is taken from the bones, causing osteoporosis and teeth to decay and general weakening sets in
- So much energy is required to digest it as well as counteract its side effects, that bacteria wither and die and the stock of B vitamins gets depleted
- Excessive sugar has a strong mal-effect on the functioning of the brain
- Too much sugar makes one sleepy; our ability to calculate and memory fails gradually
- Causes hyperactivity, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and crankiness in children. Sugar can adversely affect school children's grades and cause learning disorders. It leads to depression and makes people go nuts!
- Causes a loss of tissue elasticity and function
- Weakens eyesight
- Causes hypoglycemia and diabetes
- Causes premature aging because it changes the structure of collagen
- Lowers amount of Vitamin E in the blood
- Contributes to eczema
- Causes constipation
- Contributes towards Alzheimer's disease
- Sugar in its excess may be one of the causes of cancer, especially prostate cancer. No wonder cancer patients, like drug addicts, crave sugar as cancer cells multiply with sugar
- In women, sugar increases PMS syndromes, causing pain during menstruation. Getting rid of sugar from the diet also rid women of what is known as natural weaknesses like nervousness, or incapacity to work, which are often the result of a painful or difficult menses cycle
- High sugar intake can cause epileptic seizures.

EASY SUBSTITUTES

In the early days all our foods were sweetened with one of the following before refined sugar came into the picture. Milk was consumed with honey, tea with jaggery, curd with fruits and dry fruits, sweets with jaggery and dry fruits, bread with honey, salads with

honey etc.

Replace sugar with organic honey, organic jaggery, sugarcane juice. When in need for a refreshing sweet drink, go for hot or cold water mixed with jaggery and lemon or honey.