

The Truth About Sugar--It's Deadly

Lyle Loughry--May 2007

Recently, research was released from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden that showed people who drink soft drinks or add sugar to their coffee increase their risk of developing pancreatic cancer.

The researchers studied the diets of nearly 80,000 men and women between 1997 and 2005. Of those, 131 developed cancer of the pancreas. The group of people who reported drinking sodas or syrup-based drinks twice a day or more were 90 percent more likely to develop pancreatic cancer than those who did not consume such beverages; people who added sugar to their drinks about five times a day were 70 percent more likely to contract the disease; and those who consumed the popular Swedish sugary dessert known as creamed fruit were at a 50 percent increased risk for the cancer, according to the results published in the **American Journal of Clinical Nutrition**.

"The researchers have now been able to show that the risk of developing pancreatic cancer is related to the amount of sugar in the diet," said a statement released by the institute. "Despite the fact that the chances of developing pancreatic cancer are relatively small, it's important to learn more about the risk factors behind the disease," said researcher Susanna Larsson.

Pancreatic cancer is one of the most deadly forms of the disease, and is notoriously difficult to treat because it usually does not get diagnosed until it has spread beyond the pancreas. About 216,000 new cases of the cancer are diagnosed each year, mostly in developed countries and mostly in people older than 60. "It is perhaps the most serious form of cancer, with very poor prognoses for its victims," Larsson said. "Since it's difficult to treat and is often discovered too late, it's particularly important that we learn to prevent it."

"Pancreatic cancer is just one more serious health danger that comes from drinking soft drinks and sugar-laden beverages," said Mike Adams, a health advocate and author of *The Five Soft Drink Monsters*. "In both Europe and the United States, these drinks are contributing, not only to cancer, but also to the spreading obesity epidemic and the subsequent increase in type 2 diabetes cases." "The path to true health does not include any refined sugars whatsoever, least of all from 'sugar water' or sweetened juice drinks," he said.

In yet another recent study conducted by the **American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, high consumption of sugary beverages may also increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Researchers took

mice that were genetically predisposed to develop Alzheimer's-like symptoms as adults, and added a 10 percent sugar water solution to the diet of half of them. After 25 weeks, the mice fed the sugar water had gained 17 percent more weight than the other mice. Unlike the other mice, they had also developed insulin resistance and had higher cholesterol. The researchers then gave all the mice tests of mental function and examined the composition of their brains. The mice that had been given sugar water scored lower on tests of learning and memory retention. In addition, they were found to have more than twice the Beta-amyloid plaque deposits of the mice on the normal diet, sticky proteins that form plaque deposits in the brains of people with Alzheimer's Disease.

The results "highlight the potential risk of sugary beverages," they said. The amount of sugar water given to the mice would translate to approximately five cans of soda per day in a human. "Although since mice have a higher metabolism, it may actually take less sugar intake in humans," the researchers noted. A study published in 2006 also supports a connection between obesity and Alzheimer's, finding that the more overweight a person was, the higher their blood levels of beta-amyloids. More than 14 million people worldwide are believed to suffer from Alzheimer's disease, with a total of 24 million suffering from some form of dementia.

High-Carbohydrate Diet With Added Sugars Doubles Your Risk of Breast Cancer

A 2004 study carried out by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health reveals a strong correlation between the consumption of refined carbohydrates -- especially refined white sugar -- and increased risk of breast cancer. This was apparently a major "eureka" for these scientists, who were just then beginning to suspect that there are in fact links between diet and cancer. Of course, this is old news to nutritionists and naturopathic physicians, who have long been urging patients to avoid the consumption of refined carbohydrates, and especially refined white sugar. Not only is white sugar known to cause nutritional deficiencies and suppress immune system and brain function, it also promotes both diabetes and obesity. Now we can officially add cancer to that list, thanks to this research.

The fact is, refined white sugar is one of the most unhealthy food ingredients you can put into your body. It causes the depletion of nutrients such as vitamins and minerals that your body needs to function properly, and it causes radical swings in blood sugar that affect insulin resistance as well as mood and brain function. It has even been linked to violent behavior and various behavioral

disorders, especially in young males. The consumption of sugar is also strongly linked to attention deficit hyperactive disorder, or ADHD. Of course, Americans love to eat sugar. You can find it in ice cream, cookies, cakes, pancakes, and even things you wouldn't expect to have sugar, such as pasta sauce and pizza sauce. But sugar, it turns out, is one of those ingredients we should all be avoiding if we are to achieve optimum health.

When you consume sugar, you harm your body. You're actually doing your entire system a great disservice. You're impairing the function of your body, your internal organs such as your pancreas, and especially your brain. Sugar simply doesn't belong in the American diet, and if we were to get rid of sugar altogether, or teach people to avoid it, we would all be far healthier, and our national health care costs would plummet. Of course, Big Sugar and the sugar industry would argue against all of this. They're a lot like the tobacco industry, and they even argue that sugar isn't bad for you and it doesn't cause obesity. In fact, they want to keep exporting sugar to the entire world, so that the rest of the world can share in the high incidence of obesity and chronic disease now experienced in America. It's true -- America is the most obese and chronically diseased country in the world, and our homegrown businesses are free to export that disease to every other country around the world.

Amazingly, we even subsidize sugar in this country in order to make it cheaper. That's an economic incentive that encourages people to buy and eat more sugar (or products made with sugar). During a recent round of dialogue at the World Health Organization, the United States (encouraged by the sugar industry in the U.S.), was firmly against advice offered by the WHO that would have recommended people reduce their consumption of added sugars in order to fight obesity and diabetes around the world. They argued that sugar was perfectly good for your health and there was absolutely no evidence linking it to disease. Even though there is a tremendous amount of evidence linking disease to sugar, trying to convince sugar industry executives of that fact is sort of like trying to tell cigarette company CEOs that nicotine is addictive.

If you want to take sugar out of your diet, it would be wise for you to do it slowly, and replace the sugar with **stevia**, a natural, healthy sweetener made from the sweetleaf herb. Stevia has virtually no calories and won't alter your blood sugar in the same way that sugar does. It has been safely used around the world for thousands of years, with no reports of toxicity or negative side effects whatsoever. Stevia is available online, and in most healthfood stores.

I recommend consuming stevia over aspartame or sugar, and transition slowly. If you've been consuming a diet very high in sugar, as most Americans have, you

won't have any success at all if you try to quit sugar, cold turkey. Rather, you should plan to slowly transition off of sugar, week by week, month by month, until you are completely rid of it. It may well take you a year to accomplish your goal of being sugar-free. That would be quite reasonable. If you currently drink soft drinks, it is recommended that you give up soft drinks first, because this is one of the worst sources of added sugars in the American diet, making it more difficult to kick the habit. After you have eliminated soft drinks from your diet, you can tackle other areas of added sugars in your diet. These include candy bars, granola and energy bars, various drinks, desserts, muffins, cakes, cookies, and other pastries.

You have to look for sugar in the ingredients labels of popular foods, otherwise you won't even realize they're in there. You'll find sugar in pancake mixes, for example. Neither can you just look for the word "sugar" on the ingredient labels on foods. You must also look for terms like *sucrose* and *maltodextrin*. Another form of sugar is *fructose* which is frequently found in soy protein supplements and body building supplements. Fructose is somewhat better for you than sucrose, but fructose is still a refined sugar, and should be avoided by people seeking optimum health. Again, it all comes back to the right choice for sweeteners, and at this point in time, that choice is stevia.

The bottom line is that the research is now showing sugar to be correlated with breast cancer. This is certainly no surprise to holistic nutritionists and those who have followed wellness and health for some time. It may be news to researchers and physicians, but that's only because they tend to remain ignorant about the nutritional relationships between foods and health.