Sugar Rush

High fructose corn syrup is sweeter than sugar. But is it healthier?

February 27, 2008 By Laura Whitehorn

Meet the most hated nutritional bad boy since trans fats: high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). This ingredient is being added to all kinds of food—from bread to juice drinks to candy bars—making them sweeter than ever and, some experts say, making it easier for people to get fatter.

Food manufacturers save money when they replace sugar with corn syrup, because it is cheaper and doesn't spoil as quickly. Corn syrup is a liquid, making it cheaper to add to products like sodas and other drinks. But it's only mildly sweet. Converting it to HFCS hikes the sweetness. The true danger of HFCS is up for debate. Some say it's dangerous only because it's cheap and plentiful, but other evidence suggests that it may change to fat in your body more quickly than other sweeteners. And since many products have large amounts of HFCS, you can consume more sugar than you realize you're swallowing.

So when you scan those product nutrition labels, don't stop at "sugars." Check for HFCS, corn syrup or any added fructose. Two easy ways to cut back: Swallow fewer soft drinks and eat whole fruit instead of those juice substitutes labeled as fruit drinks.

SWEET TALK
Watch your language for these sugary—and sometimes harmful—terms:

Sucrose: The sugar in your sugar bowl.

Fructose: The sugar found naturally in fruit.

Added sugars: These are the opposite of the "naturally occurring" sugars that are found in many nutritious foods, even vegetables such as broccoli. Added sugars are "empty calories," because they have no nutritional benefit. Watch out for dextrose, maltodextrins and concentrated fruit-juice sweetener.

Corn syrup: It's made by converting cornstarch to sugars in the form of glucose.

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS): A cheaper, sweeter—and some say more harmful—version of

corn syrup, turning the cornstarch into a combo of fructose and glucose.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/sugar-fructose-syrup-14122-5903