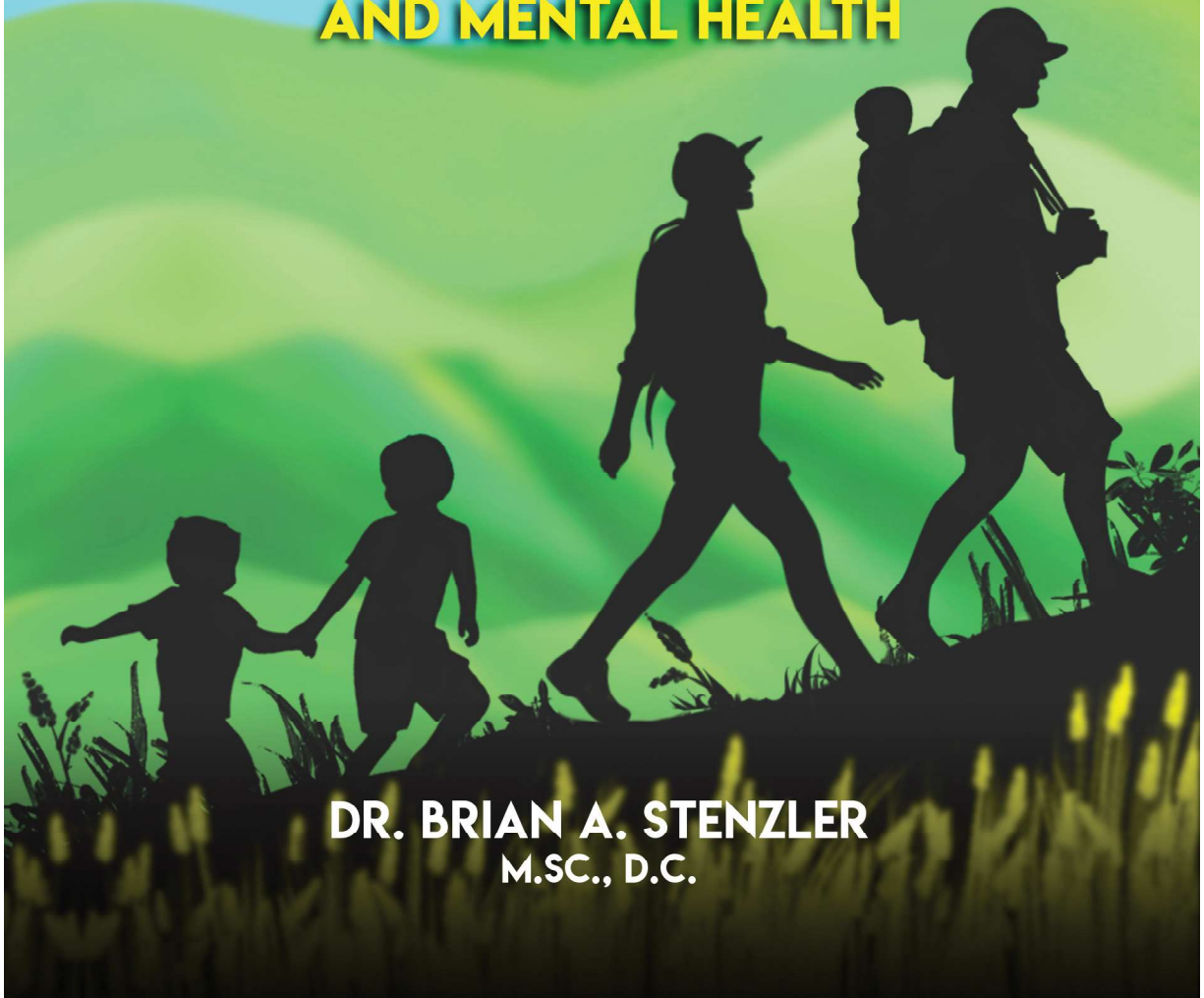


"Dr. Stenzler shares a fresh perspective on many health and wellness issues that until now were only reserved for his patients. It's chock full of nutrition advice and easy ways to create good daily habits for your children. A must-read!"

—JJ Virgin, CNS, CHFS, NYT Bestselling Author, The Virgin Diet

D.R.E.A.M. WELLNESS

**THE 5 KEYS TO RAISING KIDS
FOR A LIFETIME OF PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH**



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5-12

CARBOHYDRATES/SUGAR

♪ POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME

All carbohydrates are actually sugar. However, the way they impact your health and weight can be determined by several factors, including whether they are simple or complex, refined or whole and naturally derived or genetically modified. The nature of each sugar will have an impact on the glycemic index, which determines how quickly the food item raises the blood sugar levels. Low glycemic foods have a rating of 55 or less, whereas high glycemic food rate at 70 or higher.

Simple carbohydrates are essentially simple sugars (monosaccharides), which include glucose, fructose and galactose, or double sugars (disaccharides), which include sucrose (table sugar), lactose and maltose. Aside from the temporary energy they provide, they are considered to be “empty calories” because they offer no nutritional value. These are used to sweeten the foods we like to eat. Whether the sources of these simple sugars are from fruit (which is a combination of sucrose, fructose and glucose) or sugar cane (sucrose), they have high glycemic values and both cause blood

sugar (glucose) levels to spike. This spike can lead to issues with the pancreas and the production of insulin, energy level fluctuations, hyperactivity, decreased immune function and weight gain.

There is so much that people should be aware of when it comes to sugar, and I could never do it justice as a small part of this book. This book will cover different types of sugar and alternatives, but if you want to know more about sugar, the potential harmful effects of sugar and how to avoid it in a healthy diet, I recommend the books, *The Virgin Diet* and *Sugar Impact Diet*, both written by my friend JJ Virgin.

Complex carbohydrates (polysaccharides: three or more sugars) are starches that take a bit longer to break down because they also contain fiber and various micronutrients (*see Ch. 5-3*). If you recall from earlier in the book, micronutrients are the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that are essential for good health and they play a part in the production of hormones and proteins that are critical to body and brain function. Complex carbohydrates tend to have lower glycemic indexes and do not cause your insulin levels to spike quite as quickly as simple sugars, but that doesn't mean that they are all good.

Every carbohydrate affects blood sugar differently, so looking at the glycemic index of each food item can help determine the effect it will have on your blood sugar fluctuations. Major determining factors of a food's glycemic index include the amount of fiber it contains, the micronutrient content, the ripeness of the fruit, fat content and whether the food is refined or not. A refined food is essentially something that does not contain all of its original nutrients. In terms

of breads, refined breads have the bran and the germ stripped away unlike the whole food versions.

Lower glycemic foods include bran cereals (with no sugar added), chickpeas (including hummus), peanuts, cashews, lentils, black beans, kidney beans and cashews. Middle range would include your whole grain breads and pastas, oatmeal, bulgur and brown rice. The high glycemic foods are really too numerous to name, but some common foods that are very high on the glycemic index that would surprise some people include fruit juice (even unsweetened, but especially sweetened), baked potatoes, white rice, white pasta, white bread . . . etc . . .

The “white foods” are typically the refined and highly processed foods. The process of refining certain foods, especially in relation to grains, removes the germ and bran, which are the important and nutrient rich parts of the grain. Once that germ and bran are removed, almost all the redeeming qualities go out the window. This is one of the major reasons why food manufacturers enrich and fortify many of their products. Fortification adds back many of the essential nutrients and minerals that were removed during the refining process. Refining is done for a few reasons, including look, taste, consistency and shelf life. In my opinion, none of these are worth losing the natural vitamins and minerals in order to artificially replace them.

I would also like to bring your attention to fruit juice. Many parents love to give their kids apple juice to sip around for the day. The kids love it, and the parents think it is good for them because, heck, apples are good for them, with lots of nutrients, so what can be bad about apple juice? If you are one of those parents, hopefully by now

you are starting to see a pattern and realize what is wrong with that thinking.

What is the difference between an apple and apple juice? Well an apple is crunchy, and juice is not. That stuff you bite into that makes an apple go crunch is the plant material that is composed of fiber (and other cells of course). That fiber helps absorb the sugar that is in the apple and causes the fruit to have a lower glycemic index than just the juice. While the juice does contain vitamins and minerals, it is still mostly sugar. Kids that drink a lot of fruit juice are more likely to deal with hyperactivity issues, weight gain, diabetes and dental cavities.

A common question I get is, “Should I juice my fruits/veggies or blend them?” This is a very controversial conversation with strong opinions by the experts on both sides. I take a commonsense approach, which I combine with my intellect and experience. One of the main benefits of juicing is, it enables a person to consume a large quantity of important vitamins and minerals. In fact, one glass of juice will contain many more times the amount of micronutrients than one piece of fruit. The reason is, once you remove the pulp of the fruit or vegetable, there is nothing left but liquid enabling you to consume more. The problem is, the pulp contains the fiber. Without the fiber, the sugar in the fruit or vegetable can cause a spike in glucose levels. If you want a nutrient boost and a quick snack, juicing can be the perfect fit when done right. Be sure to prepare it with lower sugar containing veggies and fruit, such as kale, spinach, cucumbers, celery and if you must have an apple, make it a granny smith, because studies have shown that they contain the most antioxidants and promote the growth of healthy bacteria in the colon.

If you are looking for a complete meal, I recommend blending your shake, and make it nutritious, including proteins and healthy fats. I personally start approximately 340 mornings per year with a healthy shake for breakfast (*see Ch. 5-16*).

Keep in mind that the heart can be heavily affected by sugar, which can lead to cardiovascular disease. Sugar can also lead to liver problems and yeast infections within the gut and, of course, type II diabetes. The risk for type II diabetes increases 1.1% for every 150 calories of sugar consumed a day. Children who consume sugar, especially before school, tend to have difficulty concentrating in class and often get labeled as hyperactive. As a final standing, if you want your body and that of your kids to look and function optimally and prevent avoidable diseases, eliminate as many sugars from your diet as possible . . . especially the refined, highly processed and simple ones!

So how much sugar is acceptable? As you read earlier, zero grams of sugar is acceptable for children under the age of two. For kids between the ages of 2 and 18 and adult women, the American Heart Association recommends no more than 25 grams of added sugar, which is equivalent to approximately six teaspoons. For adult men, the recommendation is no more than 36 grams (nine teaspoons). It is my recommendation, however, to avoid added sugar whenever possible. And when you do consume food with added sugar, choose items that use the sugar in its most natural form (organic and unrefined) and with the lowest glycemic indexes possible.

When reading labels, you will see many different types of sugar used to sweeten certain food items, including coconut palm sugar, coconut nectar, raw honey, agave, maple syrup, date paste, date

syrup and blackstrap molasses. While many of these have a lower glycemic index than table sugar, you should be reminded that they are still sugar and should be consumed in moderation, below the recommended daily allowances mentioned above.

Quite possibly one of the most destructive forms of processed sugar is high fructose corn syrup, and it seems to be in everything! Well, not everything, but it sure seems like that, especially in the United States. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is derived from corn (as the name states) and is just as sweet as table (cane) sugar but much worse for you. So if it's so bad, why is it everywhere?

Did you know that the United States government pays farmers approximately \$100 billion to grow corn? Because corn is a subsidized crop, it makes the production of HFCS much cheaper than cane sugar, and therefore, less expensive to sweeten processed foods, which leads to much higher profit margins.

“So why is HFCS so bad for me? I thought fructose is good. Isn't that the sugar in fruit?”

Fructose is in fruit, but it is one of three sugars in fruit, the other two being sucrose and glucose. When fructose is consumed in large amounts (especially when not bound with sucrose), it can have very harmful impacts on your health. According to a 2013 article, risk of metabolic syndrome, type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease are increased.⁷

Additionally, HFCS is inherently genetically modified because two of the enzymes are used to make it more stable; that is, in addition

to the fact that most (and arguably all) of the corn is genetically modified (*see Ch. 5-10*).

Another issue with HFCS is that it easily converts into fat, because fructose is metabolized in the liver, which in turn stores it as glycogen (stored carbs) but with a limited capacity. This can lead to fatty liver and obesity more so than consuming sugar cane. Also, HFCS does not satiate the person's appetite like cane sugar, thus having people consume much more than what would usually be eaten.

Much like Zion only "allowing" us to buy foods that are organic, he is the same way about corn syrup. He never, ever asks for candy or food items that have HFCS. I am extremely blessed that I never have this battle with him. When he sees something sweet, he actually asks if it has corn syrup. If we tell him it does, he says, "Yuck," and moves on.

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5-13

AVOID ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

♪ HOW SWEET IT IS

Is there a case for artificial sweeteners? Anyone who writes about the potential negative effects of artificial sweeteners should be prepared to be sued as the manufacturers of these products have tons of money and resources and do not like being called out. So, if you would be so kind, please tell everyone you know to purchase this book because I will probably need the money to defend myself in court because I do not plan to hold back on this one!

Let's start with the redeeming qualities of these non-caloric artificial sweeteners, which should take less than 10 seconds to read. We learned that sugar in general, especially in large quantities is not good for you. If you have a sweet tooth and do not want the extra calories or blood sugar fluctuations, an alternative would be in order. Artificial sweeteners are an alternative to sugar. Okay done with the good stuff.

That said, artificial sweeteners are not a good alternative to sugar. In fact, I would argue that if you needed to choose between sugar itself

or an artificial sweetener, I would choose the sugar in a heartbeat. Even refined sugar, which I avoid as much as possible would be chosen over the artificial sweeteners. Just the word artificial should raise red flags while reading this book. (In the case of diabetes, consult your healthcare provider about your options as sugar is not advised, but I never advise artificial sugars.)

So why are they so bad? Well, if you read most of the literature on them, you would think I was crazy and they are the best thing since sliced bread . . . which they are if you think bread is good for you! Okay, I digress . . . let's get into the science . . .

First off, because artificial sweeteners have no nutrients in them (or calories), they can cause you to eat and drink more of the food or beverage that is being sweetened. While calories are partially responsible for weight gain, they also give energy and allow us to satiate ourselves, which means, we get "full" when we consume them. Food and beverages without calories can cause us to consume much more than we normally would which could easily lead to weight gain and metabolic syndrome.

Additionally, when you consume something sweet, the brain thinks you are consuming sugar, which in turn causes the pancreas to produce insulin to breakdown the sugar. However, when there is no actual sugar to breakdown, the pancreas gets confused and works in overdrive. These are not technical terms; I'm simplifying the process so that you understand what is happening. What do you think happens if the pancreas is working, producing and releasing insulin into the bloodstream when it doesn't need to?

This is like having your car engine on, the car in neutral and you are stepping really hard on the gas pedal for an extended period of time. Do you think that is good for your car? When your pancreas is working when it does not need to, it begins to stop working . . . just like your car would eventually run out of gas. What happens when your pancreas stops working? That's right, type II diabetes results.

Sucralose (Splenda) for example is 600 times sweeter than sugar . . . think about how much work the pancreas will think it needs to do when the brain thinks it needs to breakdown that much sugar.

The most common artificial sweeteners we see today are aspartame (Equal and NutraSweet), sucralose (Splenda) and saccharin (Sweet 'n Low). Aside from the effects these artificial sweeteners can have related to insulin production, there is also widespread concern that some of them may be carcinogenic. There is much more research that needs to be done, and it must be done by independent parties not related to the companies that manufacture them.

Combined, the potential side effects can include headaches, migraines, dizziness, cancers, digestive problems, mood swings and more. Additionally, pregnant and breastfeeding moms should be aware that studies show that consuming artificial sweeteners during those times can potentially cause harm. According to an article from 2014, there is evidence that exposure to these sweeteners can predispose the fetus/baby to metabolic syndrome and obesity later in life.⁸

The most unfortunate aspect to artificial sweeteners, aside from the deleterious health effects, is that they are found in so many

alleged “health food” products, such as protein powders, children’s chewable vitamins and even toothpaste.

Then there are sugar alcohols, including xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, mannitol and erythritol. These sugar substitutes are not synthetic, they do not seem to negatively affect blood glucose levels and some even have positive health benefits, including helping prevent tooth decay. However, some can cause minor issues and symptoms, including belly aches. Because the body cannot digest most sugar alcohols, they end up being metabolized by the gut bacteria in the large intestine. I would recommend only using sugar alcohols in moderation as there is still much we do not know about them, and there could be potential health issues down the road.

Now that we know that both sugar and artificial sweeteners are not wonderful, how do you get around them and still enjoy life?

I would say that the first step is to find a way to enjoy life (food) without the need for something sweet, too often. There are plenty of natural spices, herbs and flavors that wet the palate and make our foods tasty and enjoyable. To “need” something sweet is a sign that something else is lacking. I can tell you with certainty that no one was born with a tooth that requires sweetness . . . or a “sweet tooth.” If you have a well-balanced diet, your hormones are in check and you are living a wellness lifestyle, your cravings should be minimal if at all, and they usually will pass within a short period of time. Additionally, palates do change over time, so the less sweetness you consume, the less you will need.

If you must go for something sweet, here are some options on the healthier side. I personally like (organic) stevia. Some people do

not like the taste of it and others claim to have a sensitivity as well, but it is certainly worth trying. As of the latest research that I have evaluated, there is no real downside to stevia in moderation. It is a naturally occurring herb (plant) and can be purchased as an extract. While the potential is there to have a similar impact on the pancreas as other non-caloric sweeteners mentioned, this natural sweetener is not as sweet as those, so it would take a ton of stevia to have a similar effect. Stevia is the sugar substitute found in the protein powders that I drink. Another similar option to stevia without any score on the glycemic index because it has no sugar is monk fruit. Other natural sweeteners may include organic raw local honey, dates and even apples. Those do have sugar, but because they are not processed sugars and have a lower glycemic index, they are better choices than table sugar.

If you love these chapters and would like to look into purchasing a complete copy of the book, visit:
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