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Recently, the question was asked: "Is sugar good or bad for us?" As usual, the answer is not all that simple. Usually, by sugar we mean the highly purified, concentrated, white product of sugar beets or sugar cane. Also there are other sugar, fruit sugar, milk sugar, honey, sucranat, maple, jaggery, etc. Of these, white sugar is the most processed and contains a singular structure of sucrose. Pure white sugar has zero nutritional value and is only a source of pure energy. The other sugars mentioned contain some contaminates or other plant products that give them some, but minimal, nutritional value.

If you think of an internal combustion engine running on pure unadulterated gasoline, you will realize that the motor runs erratically and with a loud knocking which can only be quieted by the addition of adulterants such as ethyl, a lead substance to make it run more smoothly.

So too, when our bodies use pure sugar, they do not "run" quietly or efficiently. Vitamins, minerals, enzymes and more complex molecules are needed to give us a nutritionally active fuel. Raw sugar and brown sugars have some residual plant stuff on the purified sugar granules which makes them slightly more nutritious.

We have previously discussed the difficulty adults have in digesting lactose, milk sugar. However, these minor additives do not protect the teeth from the harm produced by the carietic process in the mouth. It has been documented that purified sugar, even brown variety, is the most common cause of dental caries.

The other great hazard to our health produced by these simple sugars is their rapid absorption into the blood stream, thus elevating the blood sugar. The body reacts to this higher level by producing insulin, which is needed by the body in order for the blood sugars to enter into the cells and to reduce the plasma blood sugar level. This usually throws the blood sugar to the lower levels that cause weakness, fainting, lethargy and nervousness. This starts a period of see-saw-like blood sugar levels that makes us ill. This is the great hazard of habitually consuming of morning sweet drinks and sweet rolls, etc. The pancreatic cells that produce the insulin are needlessly overworked and metabolic disorders such as hypoglycemia and even possibly diabetes may result. So we can easily see that it is better to obtain our fuel from the more complex carbohydrates (long chains of sugars) or starches that take a longer time to digest and slowly enter the blood stream as they combine with other desirable nutrients. The best carbohydrates for us are obtained from the whole grains, vegetables, legumes and fruit which have valuable vitamins, minerals, proteins, enzymes and fibers.

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