

## **The REALLY Scary Thing About Halloween . . . SUGAR!**

***By Geoff Bond, Nutritional Anthropologist, Author, "Deadly Harvest"***

Human Beings Are Not Designed to Even Eat a LITTLE Bit of Sugar!"

When the trick-or treaters come round I feel like exclaiming like Scrooge, "Bah, humbug!" Why 'humbug'? The word has two wonderfully befitting meanings: hogwash, and (in British English)... candy.

I really have a problem when those little kids, trustingly dressed up in Halloween costumes, accost me for a dose of sweets. Do they realize they are asking me for a fix of a powerful drug?

One that has already hooked them.

One that is already playing havoc with their biochemistry, and

One that will doom them to a life of ill health?

Apocalyptic maybe, but sugar is now the curse of the eating classes. How can this be? It tastes so good! How could nature make us crave something naturally occurring yet which makes us sick?

Sugar was not always so plentiful. Back in our ancient past, more than 60,000 years ago, when our ancestors foraged for their food, the only source of sugar was wild honey. During this formative time it is estimated that a forager only consumed about 4 pounds in a whole year. Back then, honey was rare, hard to find, and the fearsome killer bees defended their stores ferociously. Today, the average American consumes 160 pounds sugar in a year. That's 4,000% more!

Nature gave us a sweet tooth, yes, but it was a brain-program designed to encourage us to seek out not the intense sweetness of honey, but other sweetish foods that ARE beneficial, namely berries and other fruits. Even the honey-seeking was an example of what the brain-program, in its rough-and-ready way, couldn't put a stop to. But it didn't really matter – this source of concentrated sweetness was so rare that our brains never had to learn to cry, "Hold, enough!"

Nature is like that. She is not a perfectionist. She works with what works – and what works only has to be "good enough".

And that was how it was until very recent times, (some 300 years ago) – until explorers discovered sugar cane in Asia, and technologists discovered how to extract its sweet sap and concentrate it into sugar, and entrepreneurs laid down plantations in tropical lands. Then this rare substance suddenly became cheap and freely available.

This substance, this sugar, pressed all the right hot-buttons in our brains. It wasn't necessary to persuade people to buy it, they clamored for it – and then they became ADDICTED to it. It was a marketer's dream!

All this happened before we had controls in place. Had the FDA been around at the time, it would have certainly classified sugar as a dangerous drug. A drug moreover with NO redeeming features.

Moreover, the food scientists learned to smuggle this addictive drug into otherwise harmless pleasures. Chocolate used to be some 75% cocoa and at this rate (and higher) it is an agreeable, innocent, and even healthy treat in moderation. But over the years confectioners have produced an expanding range of products adulterated with higher and higher percentages of cheap sugar. And so it is that a Hershey bar is more sugar (55%) than chocolate, and a Mars bar is even worse, weighing in at 60% sugar. (If you're going to give chocolate to trick or treating kids, or anyone, make sure that it is dark chocolate with at least 75% cacao, if not higher.)

Recently a new kid arrived on the block – High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS). This is even more dangerous as it is 50% pure glucose and, because of its chemical makeup, hits the bloodstream even faster than the glucose in table sugar. HFCS is yet cheaper than cane sugar and manufacturers have, with alacrity, switched to using it in so much processed food and especially soft drinks.

So what is so bad about sugar?

The bottom line is that the body simply doesn't know how to handle it properly. The digestive tract mainlines it into the bloodstream as blood glucose (a type of sugar). This "sugar rush" of glucose creates mischief directly. It kills nerve endings and damages blood vessels.

Then the body catches up by secreting a huge spike of the powerful hormone insulin. What does this do? It packages the excess sugar up as FAT and puts it into your belly and onto your thighs. That's how sugar makes you fat.

But there's worse: insulin is a powerful hormone and having it floating around in abnormal quantities (hyperinsulinemia) upsets all other kinds of hormones. For example, it instructs the liver to MAKE cholesterol. The more abnormal the insulin level, the more abnormal the cholesterol production.

Abnormal insulin levels provoke abnormal blood clotting (leading to strokes and thrombosis), abnormal clogging and inflammation of arteries, abnormal suppression of the immune system (allowing cancers to grow), and even increased sensitivity to arthritis, allergies, and asthma.

The end result of this abuse of the blood sugar mechanism is often diabetes. Diabetes sufferers, even if medicated, are vulnerable to heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, and gangrene in the feet and hands.

Quite a horror story fit for Halloween I think you will agree – and that is why I'll not be 'treating' youngsters to candy tonight!

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