

Ode



All sugars are not created (or metabolized) equal

Corn is cancerous! OK, not quite - the high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) that is made from corn is a cancer-lover, according to a new study. Published in the Cancer Research journal, Dr. Anthony Heaney at UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center found a **link between fructose consumption and pancreatic cancer** (one of the deadliest types).

A popular ingredient in countless processed foods, from cookies and fruit bars to sodas and ketchup, HFCS was created in the 1960s as a means of selling a less-popular corn product: corn starch. The starch is heated along with an acid or malt enzyme, which turns that natural glucose (a less-sweet type of sugar molecule) into fructose (the sweetest type of sugar molecule). HFCS has the same sweetness as table sugar, but it is a lot cheaper to make, especially on a large scale.

The Corn Refiners Association started a campaign a few years ago to promote the safety of high fructose corn syrup. Both before and after that profit-fueled promotion, studies continue to be released about how HFCS is processed by our bodies differently than regular cane sugar or naturally-occurring sugars in fruit.

This latest study from UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center fed both glucose and fructose to pancreatic tumor cells. Tumors thrive on any kind of sugar, but the fructose caused the tumors to multiply exceptionally faster than glucose. "Importantly, fructose and glucose metabolism are quite different," Heaney's team wrote in the study. "I think this paper has a lot of public health implications. Hopefully, at the federal level there will be some effort to step back on the amount of high fructose corn syrup in our diets," Heaney himself said.

In 2004, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition reported that HFCS consumption has gone up 1,000 percent from 1970 to 1990. While action on a federal level would be phenomenal, we all know the easiest way to stop the consumption of HFCS – don't buy it, don't eat it, don't drink it; **eat whole (read: unprocessed) foods** and **indulge in sugar knowledgeably**. Mother Nature has done a pretty good job of providing us with healthy, great-tasting foods – let's not muck up what she took so long to perfect.