



Press Release

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Experts Lay to Rest Long-Held Misconceptions about High Fructose Corn Syrup at ILSI-USDA Workshop

Corresponding Journal of Nutrition supplement urges health professionals to help reduce consumer confusion

WASHINGTON, DC – A supplement to be published in the June issue of the *Journal of Nutrition* encourages the scientific community and the general public to stop demonizing high fructose corn syrup as the culprit of obesity and to rethink the myths about high fructose corn syrup's impact on the American diet.

"The State of the Science on Dietary Sweeteners Containing Fructose" is the scientific summary of a joint conference held in March 2008 by the International Life Sciences Institute of North America and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. Several scientific papers from the supplement are currently available online.

The conference brought together several scientific leaders from varying backgrounds, including former critics of high fructose corn syrup, who found there is little evidence that high fructose corn syrup and sugar (or sucrose) have differing effects on satiety, overall energy balance, metabolic hormones or biochemical metabolites such as triglycerides and uric acid – all suggesting no unique causal role for high fructose corn syrup in obesity.

According to Suzanne P. Murphy, Ph.D., R.D., research professor at the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii, University of Hawaii, noted in her summary of the presented papers, "...[high fructose corn syrup] and sucrose are similar and one is not 'better or worse' than the other."

Dr. Murphy notes that "it does not appear to be practical to base dietary guidance on selecting or avoiding these specific types of sweeteners."

High Fructose Corn Syrup Is Not the Same as Fructose

Confusion about high fructose corn syrup has been fueled in part by erroneous links to research testing high levels of pure fructose, and then generalizing those findings to high fructose corn syrup. The conference experts concluded that studies testing pure fructose at levels not seen in the typical diet are simply misleading in terms of understanding the metabolism of high fructose corn syrup. High fructose corn syrup never contains fructose alone. Rather, just like sugar, high fructose corn syrup is comprised of roughly equivalent amounts of fructose and glucose.

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High Fructose Corn Syrup Misconceptions Laid to Rest

“These peer-reviewed papers expose the confusion about high fructose corn syrup: it is a case of mistaken identity between two sweeteners,” said Audrae Erickson, president of the Corn Refiners Association. “High fructose corn syrup is not high in fructose, but rather has roughly half fructose and half glucose, just like sugar – therefore, it should come as no surprise that high fructose corn syrup and sugar are metabolized the same way in our bodies.”

Increased Caloric Intake, Not a Single Sweetener, the Likely Cause of Obesity

Fructose-containing sweeteners— such as sugar, invert sugar, honey, fruit juice concentrates and high fructose corn syrup—are essentially interchangeable in composition, calories and metabolism. Replacing high fructose corn syrup in foods with other fructose-containing sweeteners will provide neither improved nutrition nor a meaningful solution to the obesity crisis. “In light of similarities in composition, sweetness, energy content, processing and metabolism, claims that such sweetener substitutions bring nutritional benefit to children and their families appear disingenuous and misleading,” concluded John S. White, Ph.D., caloric sweetener expert and president of White Technical Research.

Since the introduction of high fructose corn syrup 35 years ago, calories from added sugars (mostly sucrose and high fructose corn syrup) increased at a slower rate than calories from all sources. With high fructose corn syrup use in decline since 1999, it is far more likely, writes Dr. White, that this increase in total calories was due to Americans eating more of everything.

White urges more care in interpreting experimental data that claim to demonstrate metabolic effects for fructose-containing sweeteners. “It is inappropriate to extrapolate experimental outcomes derived from pure fructose or pure glucose, or from experiments in which fructose exceeds 10% of total energy,” wrote White. “The misinterpretation of such studies as cautions against moderate dietary fructose and high fructose corn syrup use is simply not justified.”

Growing Body of Evidence

The American Medical Association in June 2008 helped put to rest a common misunderstanding about high fructose corn syrup and obesity, stating that “high fructose syrup does not appear to contribute to obesity more than other caloric sweeteners.” Even former critics of high fructose syrup dispelled myths and distanced themselves from earlier speculation about the sweetener’s link to obesity in a comprehensive scientific review published in the December 2008 *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

To learn more about the latest research and facts about sweeteners, including high fructose corn syrup, please visit www.SweetSurprise.com.

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CRA is the national trade association representing the corn refining (wet milling) industry of the United States. CRA and its predecessors have served this important segment of American agribusiness since 1913. Corn refiners manufacture sweeteners, ethanol, starch, bioproducts, corn oil, and feed products from corn components such as starch, oil, protein, and fiber.

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