

## High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS); sugar alternative or health threat?

By Heather Lewis, LMT, LMP, CLT

### Quiz:

- What has FDA approval?
- Can claim to be 100% natural and/or organic?
- Has no nutrient value, [and in fact, robs your body of essential micronutrients used to metabolize it]?
- Was not used until the 1970s but now makes up more than 20% of the average American's caloric intake by being incorporated into everything from apple turnovers to worcestershire sauce?

### Answer:

High Fructose Corn Syrup.

In the U.S., while parents try to provide their children nutritious meals, childhood obesity is growing at the rate of 15% per year. You've made a conscious effort to exchange the frosted flakes for the raisin bran, and the white bread for the whole wheat. The highly processed foods don't set foot in your home. Yet looking closely at the label of most manufactured foods you'll find High Fructose Corn Syrup.

High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) is the food industries equivalent of nicotine to cigarettes. It not only sets you up for potential liver problems, it hinders your body's ability to signal fullness. Fructose was thought of at one time to be *the* sugar alternative.

You see, the tongue tastes sweet but the body metabolizes the fructose molecule only 40% as quickly as it metabolizes the glucose molecule. The reason? Glucose can be metabolized in every cell of the body while fructose can only be metabolized in the liver.

In nature fructose is found with glucose and bound with fiber, so the body tastes the sweet, uses the glucose and passes the majority of the fructose through with the fiber. However, pure fructose robs the body of its micronutrient treasures in order to assimilate itself for physiological use. Research indicates that this free fructose interferes with the heart's use of key minerals like magnesium, copper and chromium. The livers develop fatty deposits and cirrhosis, similar to problems that develop in the livers of alcoholics. Because fructose needs these key minerals to assimilate, it inhibits collagen and elastin formation, hence the hypertrophy of the heart and liver.

The addictive properties, along with the inhibitory aspect of HFCS, happens when fructose ingestion does not allow the brain to increase production of leptin (the hormone that triggers fullness). So your tongue tastes sweet, your body is looking for energy normally produced by absorbable glucose – and when that is not available, your brain tells you to keep eating until it gets that burst of energy it's seeking. Then you eat until the stretch receptors in your stomach tell you to stop because you are uncomfortable, often times, even then you still feel hungry. This is what sets you up for continued cravings. If you've been feeling frustrated with your or your family's eating habits, try omitting items containing HFCS from your shopping list. It might seem a challenge at first, but well worth the effort.

## What exactly is yoga?

Yoga has become very popular as a form of exercise. Many people see pictures of yogis twisted into pretzels and chanting OM and shy away thinking "I could never do that, or would not even want to." But don't shy away, yoga is for every age and gender.

The word yoga means "union" in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India where yoga originated, referring to the union occurring between body, mind, and spirit. Most people think of yoga as asanas, which refers to the practice of physical postures or poses. Asana is only one of the eight "limbs" or areas of yoga, the majority of which are more concerned with mental and spiritual well being than physical activity. Today, however, the words asana and yoga have become almost synonymous to the practice of physical postures or poses.

Initially yoga students benefit from performing the asanas. These poses are designed to exercise every muscle, nerve, and gland in the body. Refined over centuries, the postures precisely address the tension, holding, and sometimes blockage of energy in any particular joint or organ. When the tension is released, energy can flow more easily in the body and allow students to experience a sense of well-being and strength—a balance of body, mind, and spirit.

Our society in general is used to sitting on chairs or couches with poor posture for extended periods of time. Our bodies were not designed to be used like this. They were designed to squat, run, walk, lift and do the natural activities of primitive daily existence. The results of these modern postural habits wreak havoc on our body with muscular shortening, tension, and energy blockages. Most of us are so accustomed to holding tension in our body that we don't recognize the damage that it's causing.

Yoga creates a healthy alignment for your bones, ligaments, and muscles. Another one of the eight limbs of yoga, meditation, works with your mind. Meditation gives you access to healing, to your inner pharmacy, according to Deepak Chopra, and to transformation. Our society is so rushed that we are not mindful of things that occur in our lives. We block pain with pills or substances, rush away to avoid things, and use all sorts of other tactics to avoid feeling these stresses. Stress is the number one root of nearly all disease. Yoga creates awareness, mindfulness, and a way toward relief from stress. With practice over time your skills increase and your stress and tensions decrease. You learn how to surmount seemingly impossible obstacles in the practice of yoga.

In a typical yoga class you would practice the poses, in addition you may receive instruction on breathing, chanting, meditation, or hear inspirational readings. The variety and amount of this will depend on the individual teacher. Yoga is taught in classroom settings, programs can be designed for personal practice, and there are many wonderful video, television classes, and books available on yoga.

*Deborah Steffen RYT is a certified and registered yoga trainer. She also has a background as an instructional designer, holistic health practitioner, and dance instructor. She teaches yoga related classes at her studio, called Cedar Mist Studios, 5 miles from Vernonia Center in a beautiful setting on her farm. Call 503-429-2103 or visit [www.CedarMistStudios.com](http://www.CedarMistStudios.com) for more information.*

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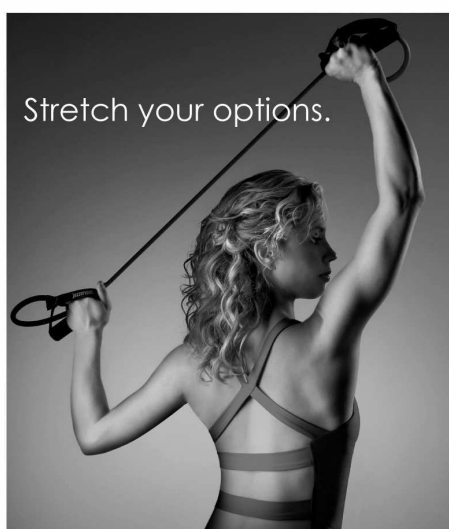
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