

# SCHOOL HEALTH LINK

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WHITMAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

APRIL 2009

## How 'Artificially' Sweet It Is!!

Splenda has an added 'bulking agent' called *Maltodextrin*. This bulking agent adds about 15 calories per tablespoon. That nutritional information, however, is not listed on the food label. Pure cane sugar has 15 calories per tablespoon

It has been reported that Americans consume about 154 pounds of sugar per year. Once again don't be misled because this number also includes other sweeteners such as dextrose, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup that are common in the current food supply. In the last decade the use of corn-based sweeteners has surpassed the use of sugar.

### Sweet Thoughts to Ponder

**Discretion is the salt and fancy the sugar of life; The one preserves and the other sweetens it.**

—John Christian Bovee  
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### What is High Fructose Corn Syrup Anyway...???

Recent media efforts have attempted to align High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) with natural sugar in statements such as HFCS is 'nutritionally equal' to sugar (sucrose). These statements are false and misleading and prey upon the public's familiarity with sugar. Sugar is all natural, exists in almost every fruit and vegetable and has been the main sweetener in every country for thousands of years.

*HFCS does not exist in nature.* It is a highly processed product that is created via the efforts of man. It was actually unknown to the world until the 1970's. Derived from corn, HFCS is made by treating corn starch with acids or enzymes. One ad states, "it's made from corn doesn't have artificial ingredients and is fine in moderation." Though there is a modicum of truth in these statements, don't be fooled. *The correlation between the 1,000% increase in the consumption of HFCS since its introduction and the sharp rise in obesity rates during that same time period is hard to deny.*

Check it out and make an informed decision as to what the best diet decision is for you and your family.

Non-caloric sweeteners.... To some they are a fat free gift from heaven; to others they are a chemical concoction leading down a slippery slope to cancer. Artificial sweeteners are commonplace in our supermarkets. They are present in a myriad of foods and beverages. This article will attempt to compare and contrast the most common sweeteners so you can decide for yourself which type of sweetener is right for you and your family or if you will take your chances with good old sugar.

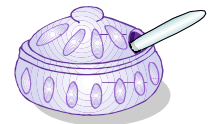
**Sucralose:** Sucralose (Splenda®) is a non-caloric sweetener made from sugar. It is 600 times sweeter than sugar. It is produced from sugar through a manufacturing process that requires many steps. The addition of chlorine changes the structure of the sugar molecule. The addition of chlorine to produce this product has

been a cause of concern for consumers although the makers of Splenda® assert that chlorine is in many foods that we eat and drink every day. Discovered in 1976 and then approved for broad use in 1999, sucralose became an all purpose sweetener. The makers of Splenda® adamantly defend the safety of their product but some consumers do question the safety of this product. According to the American Dietetic Association, more than 100 studies conducted over a 20 year period were performed to ensure the product safety of sucralose. No safety concerns were identified. Interestingly, sucralose is not recognized by the body as sugar or carbohydrate. Thus, it has no effect on how the body absorbs and uses carbohydrates. As well, it does not promote tooth decay.

**Aspartame:** (NutraSweet/Equal) is 200 times sweeter

than regular sugar. 70% of all aspartame is used in sodas. Appearing on the market in 1981, it is deemed safe. FDA guidelines recommend : 50 mg.per kg. of body weight-or about 4 (12oz) sodas per day. Aspartame is not suitable for baking and many people have reported sensitivities to aspartame in the form of headaches, dizziness, mood changes and skin reactions. The manufacturers of Aspartame deny that these symptoms are in any way related to their product.

**Saccharin:** (Sweet n'Low) is 300 times sweeter than regular sugar. It is a molecule made from petroleum. The FDA proposed a ban on it in 1977 when lab rates contracted bladder cancer from ingesting large amounts. The ban was never enacted and the warning label was dropped in 2000. Children and pregnant women are advised to use saccharin sparingly.



## How 'Naturally' Sweet It Is!!

Along with the above discussion of artificial sweeteners comes a short conversation on the attributes of good old, all American white cane sugar. Sugar, also called sucrose, is nature's gold standard for sweet taste. Natural sugars are created by nature and not in a laboratory. Sucrose, one of the pure, natural sugars, is found in almost every fruit and vegetable. It is most highly concentrated in sugar cane and sugar beets. Today's food labels use the plural term 'sugars' which include man-made sweeteners. Some products sound like they contain natural sugars but are really created by manipulating one substance to make another. When reading a food label, if it says

**SUGAR**, it means natural sucrose; nothing else. The term 'refined' sugar has taken on negative connotations over the years; implying over-processing or manipulation. The original meaning of 'refining' was 'to purify'. When sugar is purified, the natural sucrose in the plant is removed from the cane or beet plant material without bleaching or using chemicals. Natural sugar is exactly the same in the plant as it is in the sugar bowl. Sugar is not hidden in foods but a very necessary component in many aspects of cooking, baking and preserving. Sugar adds texture and browning ability to baked goods. Yeast needs sugar to initiate the fermentation

process causing bread to rise. Sugar preserves jams and fruits and enhances the flavor of tomato and vinegar-based products. It also balances the acidity of brines and cures. The uses of sugar reach far beyond the scope of this article, however since it has been around since it's discovery in the South Pacific about 8,000 years ago; it can't be all bad! Balance and moderation is important in all aspects of life and certainly important when we consider our diet and the foods we eat. A balanced diet should come from a variety of foods. Since our bodies depend on starch for a large part of our energy need, the sugar that nature provides can play a positive role. It need not be shunned as an outsider or excluded as a culprit.

Store brown sugar so it can retain its natural moisture.

Either in a tightly closed plastic bag or a moisture-proof container. If sugar hardens, let it stand overnight in a sealed jar with a damp towel or an apple slice.



**What is molasses?**

Molasses is the syrup that remains after beets and cane are processed. Sugar cane processing includes three boiling stages to extract the juice. The *first* boiling produces light molasses—the sweetest and mildest. The *second* leaves behind dark molasses which is less sweet and has a stronger flavor. The *third* brings us blackstrap molasses, the most pungent, less sweet kind. It is commonly used in livestock feed. The molasses we buy in the supermarket is made by blending molasses with a sugar solution to ensure uniformity.

**What is brown sugar?**

Brown sugar results when sugar crystals are coated in a molasses syrup. Some sugar refiners make brown sugar by boiling a special molasses syrup until brown sugar crystals form. These crystals are then spun dry and the remaining syrup gives the sugar its brown color and molasses flavor.

**What is raw sugar?**

Raw sugar is an immediate product in cane sugar production. Produced at a sugar cane mill, it is a coarse, tan product obtained from the evaporation of clarified sugar cane juice.

**Traditional Sugar Cookies**

- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. margarine/ butter
- 1/2 c. vegetable shortening
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Preheat oven to 350°.

Cream butter, shortening, and sugars together until light in color and fluffy.

Mix in eggs and vanilla. Then gently fold in flour, cream of tartar and baking soda until just combined. Chill cookie dough until firm.

Roll dough into 1 inch balls and press with a glass bottom dipped in sugar.

Bake cookies for 12 minutes or until just golden brown.

Allow cookies to cool

on baking sheets for about 2 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

This recipe makes about 2-3 dozen sugar cookies. Store them in an air tight container for up to one week.

Enjoy with a nice cold glass of milk!



**No-Cook Nut Butter Crunchies**

- 1/2 c. almond, peanut or soy butter
- 1/2 c. honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3/4 c. nonfat powdered milk
- 2/3 c. Rice Krispies

In a large bowl, blend together the nut butter, honey and vanilla.

Add the powdered milk and cereal.

Blend well and form into balls.

**Rhubarb Crisp**

Faithful rhubarb: first on the scene every spring!! Here's a healthy version that rhubarb lovers might enjoy!

- 1 c. thinly sliced rhubarb
- 1/2 c. chopped apple
- 3 T. sugar
- 1 tsp. instant tapioca
- 1/4 tsp. plus 1/8 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 T. flour
- 2 T. old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 1/2 T. packed brown sugar
- 1 T. chopped pecans
- 1 T. butter, melted
- 2 tsp. maple syrup
- 1/8 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350°.

Toss rhubarb, apple, granulated sugar, tapioca and 1/4 tsp. cinnamon in a medium bowl. Divide

between two 10-ounce oven safe custard cups.

Mix flour, oats, brown sugar, pecans, butter, syrup, salt and the remaining 1/8 tsp. cinnamon in a small bowl until crumbly. Sprinkle over the rhubarb mixture.

Bake until bubbling and lightly browned, about 30 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Top with a spoonful of vanilla ice cream and enjoy!



**Budget Cuts May Affect Vaccine Availability**

In one way or another, we are all facing the uncertainties of an economy in crisis. In Washington state, budget proposals exist that would alter children's access to vaccinations. Currently, Washington is a 'universal vaccine purchasing' state. This means that federal and state funds are used to purchase recommended vaccinations for *all* children ages birth through 18 years. Included in an article from the Washington State Department of Health Immunization Program are statements on how Govern-

nor Gregoire's proposed budget would affect our state's vaccine supply.

1. On July 1, 2009, state purchase of human papillomavirus (HPV) would be discontinued.
2. On July 1, 2010, state purchasing of all routinely-recommended vaccines would be discontinued.

Vaccines for certain populations of children would remain unchanged i.e; children

covered under Medicaid, Native American, Alaskan Native, or under-insured children.

Discussions continue regarding how future immunization policies will look. If you would like more information on this important health topic, please check out the DOH website at:

[www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/vaccine/vaccinesupply.htm#Current\\_Updates](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/vaccine/vaccinesupply.htm#Current_Updates)  
**Access to children's vaccines is vital to keeping vaccine preventable diseases at bay. Please contact your legislature to voice your opinions.**

Spring is nature's way of saying....

"Let's Party"!!!!

—Robin Williams

