



The Dark Side of High Fructose Corn Syrup

Eat a bowl of cereal. Munch a granola bar. Season your salad with a little dressing. You might be eating healthy foods ... or not. Literally thousands of processed foods contain high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) – a man-made corn-based sweetener with a dark side.

In a recent study, researchers found that animals that ate regular food but drank water sweetened with HFCS gained a lot more weight than those that ate regular food and drank water sweetened with table sugar (sucrose).

The connection between HFCS and human obesity has not yet been shown in studies. But scientists do note that obesity rates in this country started to climb dramatically

40 years ago – at the same time HFCS was first added to our processed foods.

Today, HFCS is in about 50 percent of all processed foods. Read food labels and you'll see. It is used not only as a sweetener, but also to lengthen shelf life and add moisture to processed foods. You might expect to find HFCS in candy, soft drinks, and packaged cake. But you'll also see it used in bread, yogurt, and applesauce.

If you want to control your weight and prevent other health problems, it's a good idea to cut back on all sugars, especially HFCS-sweetened foods in your diet. And it's easy. Drink water instead of soft drinks. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. And look for HFCS on food labels before you buy.

*Pharmacology, Biochemistry, and Behavior. 2010.
Princeton University. 2010.*

Make Healthy Choices With Your Smartphone

Did you know that your smartphone can help you exercise, choose healthy meals, and lose weight? You can use applications – or apps – to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Right now you can choose from more than 7,000 health and fitness apps to do things like count calories, log workouts, make a fruit smoothie, or sleep better at night. The bit of encouragement you need to make healthier lifestyle choices might just be a button on your smartphone.

Here are a few health and wellness apps currently available:

- **The Smokefree Quit Guide** (smokefree.gov/apps). Developed by the National Cancer Institute, this app gives smokers expert advice on how to kick the habit, connect to online support groups, and stay smoke-free after quitting.



- **Breathe2Relax** (apps.usa.gov/breathe2relax). Created by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, this app shows you how to manage stress with breathing exercises.
- **BMI Calculator** (apps.usa.gov/bmi-app). The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute created this app to help you keep your weight in check. This app tells you your body mass index and provides information about weight management.
- **Cardio Trainer** (<https://market.android.com/details?id=com.wsl.CardioTrainer&hl=en>). Used in a study at Illinois State University, this app tracks your exercise activity and helps you count calories.

*American Council on Exercise
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
American College of Sports Medicine*



Better Not Boil the Broccoli

When you eat broccoli as a side dish with your dinner, you're dining on the best Mother Nature has to offer. You may not have believed it when you were a kid, but broccoli – cooked or raw – packs the most nutritional punch of any vegetable.

Broccoli is loaded with nutrients like vitamin C, vitamin A, folic acid, calcium and fiber. It's one of those brightly colored vegetables that can help strengthen your bones, prevent cancer, and reduce your risk for heart disease. But that all depends on the way you prepare it.

In a recent study, researchers found that broccoli loses up to 77 percent of its nutritional value when it's boiled. Fortunately, there are other cooking methods that preserve most of the nutrients broccoli has to offer.

If you plan to cook your broccoli, steamed, stir-fried, or microwaved is in, and boiling is out. Cook broccoli for up to 15 minutes steamed, up to 3 minutes microwaved, or up to 5 minutes stir-fried, and enjoy.

University of Warwick. 2007.



Four Ways to Reduce Your Risk for a Stroke

In the time it takes you to wash your hands, you could have a stroke – from a burst artery or a blood clot that cuts off blood flow to the brain. In the United States, someone

has a stroke about every 45 seconds. A stroke often causes physical, mental, and emotional problems. While many people recover from the effects of a stroke with therapy, strokes also claim the lives of about 137,000 Americans each year.

Here are four ways you can reduce your risk of a stroke:

- 1. Lower your blood pressure.** You can lower your blood pressure by eating more fruits and vegetables and less processed foods. Exercising 30 minutes a day and losing weight will help too. You'll feel better and your heart will be healthier.
- 2. Lower your cholesterol.** High levels of LDL "bad" cholesterol can clog your arteries. Medication is one option. Eating fish, nuts, and foods high in fiber can also lower your cholesterol.
- 3. Quit smoking.** If you smoke, you can quit with the help of a smoking cessation program or medication. In addition to its link to cancer, smoking limits blood

flow in the brain and kills about 467,000 people in the United States every year.

- 4. Take aspirin.** Aspirin reduces your blood's ability to clot. Studies show that aspirin can effectively prevent a stroke in high-risk people. Talk with your doctor before you try this to see if you might benefit.

Other risk factors include diabetes, stress, drinking alcohol, lack of exercise, and a family history of a stroke or heart attack. If you think you may be at risk for a stroke, talk with your healthcare provider.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Know Stroke. Know the Signs. Act in Time

The symptoms of stroke happen quickly. If you see or have any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately.

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

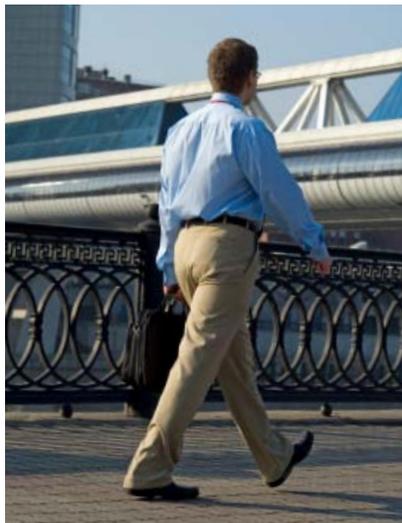
Stroke.NIH.gov

Start Exercising – Thinking Doesn't Make You Fit

If you want to lose weight and be more active, go for a walk after reading this. Learning about the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise is great. But just thinking about it doesn't make you fit.

In a study on motivation and physical activity, people were more likely to exercise when they focused on how and when to exercise instead of on the health benefits of exercise. If you want to exercise more, focus on setting a goal, tracking your progress, and scheduling time to work out. Or choose a reward for completing your goal, like buying new clothes after losing weight.

According to the study, the most effective way to be more active is to exercise with someone else such as a personal trainer, a friend, or a workout group.



You should try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. Take a brisk walk during your lunch break. Play with your kids. Or make time to hit the gym. Even a little exercise will help.

Break it up into three 10-minute walks if you need to. In fact, take one of those walks...right...now.

University of Missouri. 2011.

American Journal of Public Health. 2011.

ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

Q: How can I tell if I'm depressed?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-depression.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: evan@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Eat Unprocessed Foods" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-unprocessed-foods.pdf
Make healthier food choices this month with these helpful tips.



Q. How can I tell if I'm depressed?

A. Depression is a real medical condition with many symptoms. These include persistent sadness, anxiety, and feeling hopeless. If you are depressed, you might have lost interest in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed.

Depression can also cause problems with sleep, energy level, sexual function, motivation, memory, and concentration. For some people, it causes a lack of interest in food; for others, it causes overeating. If you're depressed, everyday activities might seem like an enormous challenge to do.

If you think you're suffering from depression, you're not alone. Millions of people struggle with depression from life experiences such as the death of a loved one, job loss, divorce, or serious illness. Other factors like genetics, personal problems, social isolation, or substance abuse are common factors linked to depression.

To help find out if you are depressed, take these self-assessments for both depression and coping. Here are the links:

How to Recognize Depression

<http://tinyurl.com/79gkaqq>

Stress & Coping Self-Test

<http://tinyurl.com/6tcqk65>

These tools can help you assess this fairly well. Then, if you are experiencing depression, the next question is, what do you do about it?



You might want to talk to a mental health counselor. This can help identify how you are coping and what it is that you would like to improve in your life. It usually helps to have a professional person to talk to. A counselor can help you improve your emotional life and set personal goals.

Even if your "blues" are just passing through, one way to help yourself right now is to engage in daily physical activity. As you become more physically active, your emotional health can improve, right along with your physical health. Regular exercise, such as walking briskly for 30 or more minutes most days of the week, can:

- Boost your mental health
- Improve your mood
- Help you feel more energetic
- Help you feel good about yourself and how you are taking better care of your body
- Prevent many serious health problems including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and worsening depression

Here is an article to read as well on maintaining good mental-emotional health.

http://helpguide.org/mental/mental_emotional_health.htm

I hope this gives you some ideas to try.





Eat Unprocessed Foods

CHALLENGE
Choose
unprocessed
foods this
month.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you eat unprocessed foods.
2. Read "Eat Unprocessed Foods."
3. To complete the Challenge, you must eat unprocessed foods on at least 22 days of this month.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

When California resident Joey Chestnut is hungry, he knows what his stomach wants...hot dogs. The Major League Eating champ holds the record for eating 68 hot dogs with buns in less than 10 minutes. Chestnut's hot dog habit may seem extreme. However, most Americans already take part in their own version of championship eating when it comes to processed food.

People love "junk food." Every year Americans eat 750 million hot dogs, and snack on 1.2 billion pounds of potato chips. In 2010, people drank about 15 billion gallons of soda pop and ate 3 billion pizzas. And a fast food drive-thru is just around the corner in most cities and towns across the country. The demand for processed food keeps expanding, right along with the nation's weight problem.

About 63 percent of adults are overweight or obese. At the heart of the obesity problem is a lack of exercise and a glut of available processed foods like potato chips, ice cream, cookies, French fries, and hamburgers.

If you eat a lot of processed foods, you're at risk for heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. But even small positive changes to your diet can make a big difference. If fruits and vegetables, nuts, and legumes are already part of your diet, way to go! If you think you could make better food choices, now is a great time to begin.



The Problem with Processed Foods

If you eat a hamburger with French fries and gulp down a soft drink, the food you've just eaten contains large amounts of sodium, sugar, trans fats, and calories. Processed foods like buttered movie theater popcorn, candy bars, energy drinks, and many frozen microwave meals are also high in calories. Eating too much processed food puts you at risk for a range of health problems, including obesity.

Sodium/Salt

A typical fast food meal contains at least 1,300 mg of sodium, and often more. That's a lot when the daily recommended amount of sodium is 1,500 to 2,300 mg. Other processed foods like packaged cheese, canned soups, and meals-in-a-box also contain high amounts of sodium. Read the labels and you'll see.

Too much sodium in your diet can lead to high blood pressure, which can cause heart disease or stroke. About 800,000 people die each year from a heart attack or stroke. One reason for these deaths is the high amount of sodium people get from eating fast food and processed foods. In the United States, the average person eats about 3,400 mg of sodium per day, largely from fast food and processed foods, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Sugar

The average 12-ounce soft drink contains 39 grams of sugar. But the recommended daily limit of sugar is just 20 grams for women and 36 grams for men. Soft drinks, sweet treats, and excess carbohydrates can raise your blood sugar level. Many processed foods, drinks, desserts, and condiments contain high amounts of sugar, most often *high-fructose corn syrup*. In a recent Princeton study, animals fed this corn-based, man-made sweetener had abnormal weight gain. The glucose-fed animals did not. Sugar is your body's primary source of energy, but too much can lead to weight gain and diabetes.

About 190,000 people in the United States die from diabetes each year. Right now about 26 million Americans have diabetes; another 79 million have pre-diabetes. It's the seventh leading cause of death and a major cause of heart disease – America's number-one killer. In most cases, diabetes can be prevented with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Trans fats

Donuts from your local bakery, French fries, onion rings, crispy crackers, and many frozen meals contain trans fats. Also called hydrogenated fats, trans fats were created to lengthen the shelf life of processed foods. Sadly, these man-made fats also raise the level of bad cholesterol in your body, clog your arteries, and increase your risk for heart disease. Since 2006, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has required food manufacturers to list trans fats in products or menu items if they have at least 0.5 grams per serving.



Q: What Are Unprocessed Foods?

A: Foods that you could grow or make yourself.

That doesn't mean you have to take up organic farming. But if a food label lists ingredients you've never heard of, the contents are probably processed.

So, if you take fast food, crackers, cookies, canned soup, and packaged meals off the table, what's left? Plenty. When you're ready to prepare your next meal or take a trip to the grocery store, here's what to look for.



Fresh fruits & raw or steamed vegetables

Just give these delicious foods a chance to prove themselves. Have you ever eaten hot corn on the cob without butter or salt? The kernels are sweet and juicy all by themselves. Steamed broccoli – without sauce or cheese – is also mildly sweet. So are peas, cauliflower, carrots, sweet potatoes, and red bell pepper.

Fresh fruits like blueberries, strawberries, and banana are excellent toppers to cereal or yogurt. Freeze fresh fruits to make a thick fruit smoothie. Dark-colored fruits and vegetables are especially rich in antioxidants that help keep the heart healthy.



Eating fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure, reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke, and keep your blood sugar and cholesterol levels in check. Fruits and vegetables are also good sources of minerals, vitamins, and fiber. In

a recent study, eating more fiber helped people reduce the amount of fat surrounding their organs by 4 percent during a five-year period. Aim to eat 5-9 servings of vegetables and fruits each day.

Whole grains



Choose whole-grain bread, brown rice, and steel-cut oats. In a recent study, people who ate at least 2.5 servings per day of whole grains (found in brown rice, bran, and some

breakfast cereals) reduced their risk of heart disease by 30 percent. In another study, people who ate a high-fiber diet (at least 26 grams per day) from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables decreased their risk of early death by 22 percent compared to those who ate less fiber during the nine-year study.

Healthy Proteins



Legumes, fish, lean meats, and poultry are low in saturated fat and are a good source of protein. Adults should get at least 46-56 grams of protein per day.

Protein- and fiber-rich legumes include black beans, kidney beans, lima beans, and garbanzo beans. Add them to a homemade soup or salad. For fish and poultry, skip the processed frozen fish sticks and deli meats like bologna. Instead, choose fresh-



caught salmon or canned tuna. For poultry, choose baked chicken or low-fat cooked turkey slices – not luncheon slices, but the real thing. About one-fourth of your plate at each meal should include healthy proteins.



The trick to being successful is substituting healthier foods that are also tasty. Remember to keep whole, unprocessed foods in mind.

[More —>](#)



Eat This. Not That.

Most processed foods have healthy alternatives. For example:

- ✓ Eat fresh instead of canned tomatoes. A serving of fresh tomatoes contains about 2 mg of sodium. But a serving of canned tomatoes contains 200-300 mg of sodium.
- ✓ Drink water instead of soda pop. A 12-ounce sugary soft drink has about 180 calories. Calorie count for water: 0.
- ✓ Eat an apple instead of a candy bar. A typical candy bar – and many “protein bars” too – contain about 250 calories, plus unhealthy fat. An apple has only 80 calories and comes with a healthy serving of fiber and other nutrients.
- ✓ Serve a fresh fruit salad instead of a packaged dessert.
- ✓ Eat fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned. (Same for fruit.)
- ✓ Choose whole-grain, low-sugar cereals instead of highly processed, brightly colored, sugary cereals.



Do It Yourself.

- ✓ Make your own soup with all fresh ingredients. Pass on high-sodium canned soup.
- ✓ Shake up your own salad dressing.
- ✓ Bake a cake from scratch, not from a box.
- ✓ Make your own pancakes using whole-grain flour instead of ready-made mixes in a bag.

One Day at a Time

- ✓ Try planning out your meals a week in advance.
- ✓ Just say NO to frozen entrees. If you don't feel like preparing an elaborate entree, make something that's easier. Try a burrito with a whole-wheat tortilla, black beans, brown rice, salsa, jack cheese, and fresh avocado. Roll, bake, and eat.
- ✓ Give up eating canned foods for a day.
- ✓ For one meal a day (see samples below), eat all unprocessed foods.

Breakfast:

- Fresh-squeezed orange juice
- Cooked steel-cut oats topped with blueberries
- Scrambled eggs or egg whites

Lunch:

- Grilled chicken breast
- Green salad with walnuts and dried cranberries
- Salad dressing made from extra-virgin olive oil and vinegar

Dinner:

- Baked salmon, with olive oil, garlic, and herbs
- Steamed broccoli
- Baked sweet potatoes mashed with orange juice

Snacks:

- Popcorn (air-popped)
- Vegetables with hummus made from garbanzo beans
- Fruit smoothie

Sources:

Princeton University.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 49(1)93-96.
Making fast food even faster. The New York Times.
Lifestyle factors and 5-year abdominal fat accumulation in a minority cohort: The IRAS Family Study. Obesity.
Harvard School of Public Health.
American Journal of Kidney Disease, 55(4):A31-2.
American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 70(3)412-419.
National Restaurant Association.
National Institutes of Health.
Institute of Medicine.
Archives of Internal Medicine, 171(12):1061-1068.
Your Guide to Lowering Your Blood Pressure With DASH.
National Institutes of Health.



Unprocessed Foods are Heart-Healthy

For food tips and recipes:

Delicious Decisions
American Heart Association
<http://tinyurl.com/84fx7sa>

Stay Young At Heart
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
<http://tinyurl.com/49mnn3>

Healthy Eating at Home
Harvard School of Public Health
<http://tinyurl.com/5w7go8>





Eat Unprocessed Foods

CHALLENGE
Choose unprocessed foods this month.

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you ate more unprocessed food and less processed food than you usually do.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate more unprocessed food and less processed food. You must meet this goal on at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							

_____ Number of days this month I ate unprocessed foods

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____