

Sweetener Showdown: Cane Sugar vs. High Fructose Corn Syrup

We hear all the hype about **High Fructose Corn Syrup** (HFCS) and how bad it is for us, but what exactly is it, and how does it really differ from regular sugar- if it does at all??

- High fructose corn syrup is a sweetener made from corn. It's sweeter and cheaper than sucrose, which is the form of sugar made from sugar cane.
- High fructose corn syrup is a common additive in many kinds of processed foods, not just sweets. Most non-diet soft drinks are sweetened with high fructose corn syrup.

Why it's controversial

Some experts have proposed that people metabolize high fructose corn syrup in a way that raises the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes more than sugar made from sugar cane. Much of the controversy stems from the observation that obesity in the United States and consumption of high fructose corn syrup increased at the same time.

What the research shows

"It's just sugar," says Marion Nestle, PhD, a professor of nutrition and public health at New York University. "Biochemically, there's no difference."

"There's a little bit more fructose in high fructose corn syrup, but not a lot," Nestle says. "It doesn't really make any difference. The body can't tell them apart." The American Medical Association recently stated that there is scant evidence to support the idea that high fructose corn syrup is any worse than cane sugar and that consuming too much sugar of either kind is unhealthy.

(WebMD Feature Article, "The Truth About 7 Common Food Additives")