News Flash: Sugar Isn't Always Bad

Prepare to be shocked. Ready? Okay, here we go…sugar is probably not as bad as you like to believe. Yes, you heard me right.

These days, it seems that sugar is one of the demonized substances on the face of the planet, and I been **flabbergasted at the number of people who will look at the label of, say, an extremely healthy protein powder (think VIBE) completely flip out** over the 5 to 10 grams of sugar that they see on the label of the package.

It gets even more shocking when you look at the level of physical activity in these folks: Ironman triathletes, Spartan athletes, CrossFitters, and people for whom this amount of sugar is truly a speedbump when it comes to any amount of metabolic damage.

And yet you hear the same things over and over again:

"Sugar is toxic!"

"Any sugar gets turned into fat in the liver!"

"Sugar oxidizes cholesterol, no matter what!"

"Sugar causes massive insulin spikes that make you fat!"

"Sugar rips you out of ketosis and fat-burning mode!"

Whenever I hear such extreme statements made about sugar, I get just a little bit annoyed, and you're about to discover why.

What Is Sugar?

Let's first look at what sugar really is.

In nutrition science are three forms of sugar: monosaccharides, oligosaccharides and polysaccharides.

Monosaccharides are often called simple sugars because they have a very simple structure (mono means one and saccharide means sugar). Monosaccharides include glucose, fructose, and galactose.

- **Glucose** is a type of sugar that is most commonly known as blood sugar, and is found in your blood and produced from the food you eat. **Most food-based carbohydrates contain glucose**, either as the only form of sugar or combined with fructose and galactose. So when you hear people talk about blood sugar

levels, they're referring to the amount of the monosaccharide glucose in the blood.

- Then there's **fructose**. Fructose is a sugar naturally found in fruit, and also in processed products such as sucrose (table sugar) and high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), both of which are about 50% fructose and 50% glucose. Fructose is basically converted into glucose by your liver and then released into the blood as blood sugar.

- Finally, **galactose** is a type of sugar **found in dairy products** and it's metabolized similarly to fructose.

Oligosaccharides are molecules that contain several monosaccharides linked together in a chain. These sugars are one of the components of fiber found in plants, and your body is able to partially break down some of these oligosaccharides into glucose. **Vegetables (shocker!) even have sugar in the form of fructo-oligosaccharides**, which are short chains of fructose molecules. These chains are broken and the individual fructose molecules are then converted into glucose. Raffinose, for example, is a common form of oligosaccharide and is comprised of a chain of galactose, glucose, and fructose, and is found in healthy foods like beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, asparagus, and natural, whole grains.

Polysaccharides are long chains of monosaccharides, with ten or more monosaccharide units. Starch from plants and cellulose, **a natural fiber found in many plants**, are two examples of polysaccharide "sugars" (so toxic, eh?). Your body is able to break starches down into glucose, but not cellulose, because it passes through your digestive system intact…

… But every single sugar you just discovered, whether it's from vegetables, whole grains, or can of soda, mostly winds up his glucose. As a matter of fact, every drop of carbohydrate you eat is either metabolized into glucose is left indigested as dietary fiber, and your body truly can't tell the difference between the sugar found in fruit, honey or milk, or a candy bar. **They're all broken down into monosaccharides, which are then turned into glucose, which are then transported to your brain, muscles, and organs.**

Now don't get me wrong: **I'm not saying that you should forgo your VIBE shake or salad for a cup of ice cream** because it all winds up in the same place. But, I do want you to understand that you're probably eating sugar no matter whether you realize it or not!

When Sugar Is Bad?

In a 2010 review of the science of sugar, entitled "**Misconceptions about fructose-containing sugars and their role in the obesity epidemic**", Luc Tappy, a researcher at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, who is considered by biochemists who study fructose, to be **the world's foremost authority on the subject**, said there is "not the

single hint" that High Fructose Corn Syrup was more damaging than other sources of sugar.

In a nutshell, what research actually shows is that **sugar-sweetened compounds are bad for us not because there's anything particularly toxic about the sugar they contain but just because people consume…**

…too much sugar.

The bottom line is that fructose is just another simple sugar and can only harm you when you over-consume it. And, as you learned earlier, sucrose occurs in completely natural foods like pineapples, sweet potatoes, beets, sugar cane, walnuts, pecans, and cashews.

Here's another shocker. In this study, researchers from The Sugar Bureau in the UK found that increased sugar intake was associated with leanness, not obesity, and concluded that **there simply wasn't enough evidence to warrant a recommended intake guideline for sugar consumption**. Another study, at the University of Hawaii, which is an extensive review of sugar-related literature, quoted:

*"It is important to state at the outset that **there is no direct connection between added sugars intake and obesity** unless excessive consumption of sugar-containing beverages and foods leads to energy imbalance and the resultant weight gain."*

So Now What … ?

What's the take away message here?

When you're looking at the label of some health tonic or **protein powder (like VIBE)**, and you see that it **contains 5 to 10 grams** of sugar, that **is an itsy-bitsy drop in the bucket** that has never been proven by any form of nutritional science to causing metabolic disease, especially if you are a physically active person. **You are literally burning that much sugar within the first 15 minutes after you get out of bed.**

Instead, it is the overconsumption of sugar, and the 1000+ calories of soda, hamburger buns, ice cream, pizza and the like that causes the issues related to chronic disease, metabolic issues, obesity, insulin resistance, a loss of "fat adaptation" and all the other issues that sugar enemies are screaming about.

So unless you are stuffing your face with junk food, you've got nothing to worry about when it comes to trace amounts of natural sugars found in your health needs..