

We Get Letters

Sugar Linked to Hypertension and Diabetes

Dear Editor:

Your food section article, "Breakfast needs allies ..." quoted Karen MacLeod from the Kellogg Co. as saying, "There's no relation between sugar and health." Nowhere in your article did you suggest that sugary sweet cereals may be dangerous for your readers.

You might shudder to think that the excessive consumption of sugar your article supports contributes significantly to four of the top five causes of death and suffering in the United States: cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Yes, excessive sugar makes the human body sick.

You may need to be convinced of this, and a short letter will not be enough because you have read unsupported claims from food manufacturers like Kellogg for too long without seeking one shred of scientific evidence in support of their profit-based claims. I limit this letter to excerpts from four scientific articles linking sugar to disease, and I will let you draw your own conclusions.

From the research journal, *Nutrition and Cancer*, 9:199-217, 1987: Experimental data have been available since the 1940s that prove caloric restriction of excessive sugar and fat significantly reduces tumor incidence for a variety of tumor types in several animal models. High caloric intake of sugar and fat has been associated with increased risk of cancer of the breast, colon, rectum, prostate, endometrium, kidney, cervix, ovary, thyroid, and gallbladder.

From *Postgraduate Medicine* in March 1991: The goals of intensive treatment of type II diabetes are to restore blood glucose levels to normal; correct hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and other cardiovascular risk factors; and prevent hyperinsulinemia. Treatment should begin with attempts to reduce weight through dietary restriction of sugar and fat, combined with exercise. In fact, diet and exercise should be stressed as vital components of a diabetic patient's lifestyle, no matter what treatment method is used.

Note that more than half of those with diabetes do not know they have the disease and that more than 85 percent could successfully avoid ever getting the disease if they avoided excessive sugar and other sources of nutritionally worthless calories.

From the April 1991 issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*: Weight reduction by sugar and fat restriction lowered blood pressure. These results demonstrate that weight loss has a blood pressure-lowering effect.

And from the prestigious *Journal of Cardiovascular Pharmacology* 15(5):S-4-7: Endogenous hyperinsulinemia (a response to excessive sugar consumption) and hypertriglyceridemia have been identified as factors that increase the risk of heart disease.

Much more could be said, but suffice it to say that "Breakfast needs allies ..." Certainly Kellogg is not a safe ally when most of their breakfasts are as sweet as candy. Instead, we need allies like cooked oats, whole grain toast covered with simple apple spreads, bran waffles sweetened with fresh strawberries and dabbed with yogurt, and other wholesome foods -- incidentally, not sold for profit by the Kellogg Co. Perhaps Kellogg has convinced you that their expensive and unhealthful cereals are a better ally than mom's cooking, but they haven't convinced many nutritional scientists.

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