4 Food Items That Sound Healthy, But Really Aren't

By Josh Bloom — December 20, 2020

Is brown sugar healthier than white sugar? Is honey good for you? How about bean sprouts and lemon water? Strange menu, no?

It's too bad I went for the Ph.D. Financially speaking, I should have probably stopped with a BS. Not that kind of BS, though. I mean the kind that refers to a male four-legged mammal followed by a word one is not supposed to use on a respected site like this.

This type of BS really sells because there are a bunch of "enlightened consumers" out there who have bought into fallacies that they believe will keep themselves and their families alive until the year 2150 (or the next Knicks championship, whichever comes first).

Although the list is endless, here are a few of my favorites.

1. Brown sugar

If there is anything that (currently) needs to be avoided, it's sugar, the poster child of obesity, diabetes, cancer, and jock itch. In fact, we are eating so much more sugar in the past two decades it's a wonder that anyone is walking around with a single tooth. Except it isn't true.

But perhaps it's concerning that people are eating all that icky, refined white sugar. Perhaps the "natural unrefined" brown sugar is better. After all, it's more natural, right?

Nope. Here's how brown sugar is made:

Crude sugar/boiling water ------> Molasses
Molasses added to white sugar ------> Brown sugar

White sugar plus artificial flavor/color = healthier than white sugar? I don't think so.

2. Honey

Honey = good.

"Hi Honey, how was your day?"

"Thanks for asking Honey. Mikey threw up Frosted Brown Cinnamon Pop-Tarts on Mervyn but otherwise, things were just fine. I missed you, Honey!" (I suspect Mikey won't be the only one throwing up if I keep this up.)

On the other hand, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) = bad and not just as a term of endearment. Even medical experts like Dr. Joe "Crazy Joe" Mercola know this to be true.
HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP:
Bitter Truths and Dangers to the Last Drop!

Download My FREE E-BOOK Bad to the Last Drop: Refiners Squeeze Dangerous Additives from Corn now and learn why you should avoid this sickening sweetener at all costs.

Source: Mercola.com [3]

Maybe HFCS is bad, but Pop-Tarts sure are yummy. Let’s look at the label.


Well, no wonder Mikey hurled on Mervyn! It must have been the HFCS.

Mervyn expresses his displeasure of being the target of Mikey’s semi-digested Pop-Tart breakfast. Photo: pxhere [5]

Or was it? Here is the composition of HFCS-42 [6] (1):

- Fructose - 43%
- Glucose - 52%
- Miscellaneous polysaccharides - 5%

Well, whoever named HFCS surely did a good job because there sure is a lot of fructose in there.

Before this gets out of hand, let’s look at the composition of honey [7].
Let's toss out the water, and we get this:

- Fructose - 46%
- Glucose - 37%
- Other sugars - 8%

Well, look at that. Honey contains about 1.2-times more fructose per serving than HFCS (1). Go figure.

3. Bean Sprouts

What could possibly be more healthy than cramming a bunch of bean sprouts down your throat? No fat, no cholesterol, very little sugar, virtually no calories, natural nutrients, and plenty of roughage to get the old plumbing going should you be in need.

The trouble is that bean sprouts can get the plumbing going in the other direction. When eaten raw, they are one of the common causes of food poisoning [9]. Washing them doesn't help because they can absorb germs that are in the soil. A 2011 article [10] on the HuffPost site claims that bean sprouts may be "the riskiest food in your grocery store." And I'm not sure where the data came from, but WebMD lists the vile little monstrosities as the #1 cause [11] of food poisoning.

4. Lemon Water

Since it is clear that our bodies are thoroughly incapable of ridding themselves of all the waste we are carrying around (sarcasm), it cannot be surprising that there is a countless number of "Detox" products for sale. Some of them aren't even fit for this article, but one – lemon water seems harmless enough.

The problem is that there is nothing to detox; your body is built to do this quite readily. And lemon water isn't exactly harmless, especially when consumed regularly. For example, Healthline [12] his this to say:

"Lemon water is generally safe to drink, but there are a few potential side effects to be aware of. Lemon contains citric acid, which may erode tooth enamel. To limit the risk, drink lemon water through a straw, and rinse your mouth with plain water afterwards."
Sort of sounds like the warning label for Drano, no?

Although the chuckleheads at Healthline also claim that it "can go either way" with heartburn because the lemon will eventually turn basic (2), an article on Insider [13] paints a different picture:

"Too much lemon water can also lead to heartburn, nausea, vomiting, and other gastroesophageal reflux symptoms."

And if you're in the mood for a wedge of lemon in your glass of water, you might consider drinking straight from the toilet instead. A paper [14] in the Journal of Environmental Study that of the rinds tested from 21 different restaurants, 70% of them grew bacteria when swabs were applied to an agar plate.

What to do?

Clearly, I need to do more research, but at present, I'm sticking with Cap'nCrunch and a Diet Coke chaser.

NOTES:

(1) HFCS-42 is the most commonly used version of high fructose corn syrup. It contains 42% fructose. The sweetest variety is HFCS-55.

(2) Dude needs a chemistry lesson. The pH of lemon juice is 2, so it can just about eat the chrome off your bumpers.