

# High fructose corn syrup and sucrose: Equally sweet, equally safe

By ACSH Staff — February 14, 2013

A [study](#) [1] published this week in the *Journal of Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism* presented compelling data showing that the consumption of neither high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), nor sucrose (table sugar) at levels consistent with average daily consumption increased liver or muscle fat in humans.

The findings also add to an already well-established body of science that high fructose corn syrup and table sugar are metabolically equivalent.

The study, conducted by James Rippe, MD, of the University of Central Florida, examined 64 people, who consumed low-fat milk sweetened with either HFCS or sucrose with the added sugar matching the 25th, 50th and 90th percentile population consumption levels of fructose for ten weeks.

The results showed that fat content of the liver was unchanged when the six HFCS and sucrose groups were averaged. Furthermore, fat content in muscle tissue also remained unchanged over the 10 weeks when the six HFCS and sucrose groups were averaged.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross is somewhat skeptical regarding the rigor of this study, although not with the conclusions thereof: The study's duration is quite short. I'm also concerned about the validity of using CT and MRI scans to quantitatively assess fatty buildup in tissues. If the researchers conducted biopsies of the liver and muscle and found no fatty infiltration, that would have been more convincing, to me anyway. Nevertheless, I'd put this study in the file with the many others which similarly undermine those who target HFCS as a unique causative factor in America's obesity epidemic.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava commented that, Although this study is certainly a short-term one, the comparison of HFCS and sucrose is informative and important. Many studies that impugn HFCS have extrapolated from the results of consuming high levels of pure fructose, which is NOT the same as HFCS.

While the scientific evidence indicates that HFCS is no more of a metabolic problem than table sugar, both sweeteners are still under attack. Just [yesterday](#) [2] a group of health advocates and public health officials led by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) also known as the Food Police asked the FDA to regulate the amount of caloric sweeteners in sodas and other beverages.

CSPI has asked the FDA to set a limit for the amount of caloric sweeteners in beverages, and called for the agency to request that marketers voluntarily limit sweeteners in packaged goods, such as cereals and snacks, and mount an educational campaign to help consumers reduce

added sugars in their diet.

Regarding the CSPI public health petition to the FDA, Dr. Kava added: As for the idea that the FDA should set limits on the amount of HFCS and sucrose, one must ask what the scientific underpinnings of such limits might be? Do we know, for example, that consuming 10 teaspoons of sugar in a beverage is OK, but having 16 teaspoons is not? The FDA must adhere to the scientific evidence.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom wonders where this is all going. He says, I'm no constitutional scholar, but I seriously doubt that James Madison envisioned a government agency telling us what to eat. For more information on high fructose corn syrup, read our recent [publication](#) [3] where Dr. Ruth Kava explains how the scare about HFCS got started, why it's used by food makers, and why there are multiple reasons to believe HFCS is not responsible for the epidemic of obesity.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Science/Study-provides-compelling-evidence-that-HFCS-and-sucrose-do-not-increase-liver-fat-in-real-world-conditions>

[2] [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/14/business/health-officials-urge-fda-action-on-soft-drinks.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/14/business/health-officials-urge-fda-action-on-soft-drinks.html?_r=1&)

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/new-acsh-publication-examines-high-fructose-corn-syrup/>