

SUGAR AND FOODS THAT CONVERT RAPIDLY TO SUGAR IN THE BLOODSTREAM ARE TOXIC

This highly charged statement might seem unduly harsh, especially as we gaze lovingly and longingly at that chocolate-chip cookie, Danish, or plate of rice cakes sitting on our desks. However, it is true. **This very basic fact has been at the core of every book I have written,** beginning with *The Wrinkle Cure* and continued in *The Perricone Prescription*, *The Perricone Promise*, *The Clear Skin Prescription*, and *The Perricone Weight Loss Diet*.

You may be asking yourself how something as American as apple pie could be regarded with both fear and loathing. The answer is simple. **Sugar and high-glycemic carbohydrates are proinflammatory: that is, they create an inflammatory response in the body.** My decades of research have shown that chronic, subclinical inflammation is the single greatest precipitator of aging and age-related diseases. These include diseases as diverse as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, certain forms of cancer, obesity, unwanted weight gain, loss of muscle mass, and wrinkled, sagging skin.

This inflammation takes place on a cellular level and exists in all of our cells. It does its harm by triggering free radicals, which accelerate aging by damaging cells—leading to their eventual breakdown. Unfortunately, this inflammation is invisible to the naked eye: we can't see it or feel it until it is too late, and the damage is done. Many factors can trigger inflammation, including a proinflammatory diet, stress, environmental stressors (such as air pollution, pesticides, herbicides, etc.), weakened immune system, excess exposure to ultraviolet light, and hormonal changes. However, I believe the primary cause is diet—with stress running a close second.

Diet and Aging: The Sugar Connection

Foods that we eat can be either proinflammatory (i.e., they provoke an inflammatory response) or anti-inflammatory (i.e., they suppress the inflammatory response). The chief culprits in the proinflammatory arena are sugar and foods that quickly convert to sugar in the body (also known as high-glycemic carbohydrates). These include cakes, cookies, desserts, potatoes, most packaged breakfast cereals, breads, pastries, baked goods, juice, soda, chips, and rice cakes. Proinflammatory foods will exacerbate acne lesions, cause us to pack on the pounds, make us old before our time, and place us at serious risk for the many diseases and degenerative conditions listed above.

Understanding the Mechanism

Proinflammatory foods cause a sudden spike in blood sugar, triggering an insulin response from the pancreas in an effort to control the rising level of blood sugar. Diabetics do not have a properly functioning pancreas, and consequently they suffer from high blood sugar, which usually must be treated with insulin, diet, and exercise. Diabetics with poorly controlled blood sugar actually age one-third faster than do nondiabetics. Diabetics tend to have widespread, measurable inflammation in their bodies. Their constant high sugar levels cause kidney failure, blindness, heart attacks, and strokes. Studies have shown that when diabetics keep their blood sugar levels within normal range, they can cut their rate of health problems by 70 percent.

The bad news is that you don't have to be diabetic to experience the detrimental inflammatory response from sugar. Even a healthy body is damaged by sugar in a phenomenon known as glycation.

Rick Panson • Nutritional Microbiologist • 212-533-5256
healthybodycoach@gmail.com • www.RickPanson.com

Two decades in private dermatology practice and seeing thousands of patients, in conjunction with extensive study on the subject, has confirmed my belief that sugar is extremely damaging to the skin—in fact to all organ systems. I have used every platform available—from my books to my university lecture series on public television—to sound this alarm.

When we eat high-glycemic carbohydrates, they cause an immediate browning or glycation of the protein in our tissues. Glycation—a process long known to discolor and toughen food in storage—can occur in skin as well, creating detrimental age-related changes to collagen, and that means deep wrinkles. Glycation occurs when the sugar molecules permanently attach to collagen present in the skin and other parts of the body.

At the point of attachment, there is a small mechanism creating inflammation, which then becomes a source of inflammation in its own right. This inflammation produces enzymes that break down collagen, resulting in wrinkles. In addition to inflammation, glycation also causes cross-linking in our collagen, making it stiff and inflexible where it was once soft and supple.

This extensive cross-linking of collagen causes the loss of skin elasticity. Healthy collagen strands normally slide over one another, which keeps skin elastic. If a young person smiles or frowns, creating lines in the face, the skin will snap back and be smooth again when she stops smiling or frowning. But the skin does not snap back out in a person whose collagen has been crosslinked from years of eating sugar and the wrong carbs. Those deep grooves remain, because that is where the sugar molecules have attached to collagen, making the fibers stiff and inflexible.

The bond between the sugar and collagen generates a large number of free radicals leading to more inflammation. When glycation occurs in the skin, the ultimate effect is not unlike tanning a leather hide. Over time, skin begins to resemble a cross between beef jerky and an old boot, unevenly discolored and heavily striated with deep lines and grooves.

But it is not just the skin we have to worry about. These “sugar bonds” can occur throughout the body as we age. The sugar molecule attaches itself to the collagen, as well as our arteries, veins, bones, ligaments, even our brains, resulting in the breakdown of organ systems and the deterioration of the body. Glycation creates “free radical factories” known as advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which also increase cellular inflammation. These statements are based in solid scientific study. Glycation and advanced glycation end-products can be found in every medical textbook.

Although she is not a scientist, Connie Bennett is living proof of the havoc these proinflammatory foods can and do wreak. *SUGAR SHOCK!* is both a cautionary tale and one of hope. Connie shows us that, like her, we *can* beat the addiction and reclaim our health and well-being. I applaud her choice of Stephen Sinatra, M.D., F.A.C.C., as medical consultant.

Dr. Sinatra and I are colleagues of long standing and like minds. It is heartening to see more and more people—both physicians and scientists of Dr. Sinatra's caliber and laypeople such as Connie, with valuable firsthand experience—use their voices to raise awareness of the debilitating dangers of proinflammatory foods, with sugar leading the pack.

Nicholas Perricone, M.D.,
Madison, CT, April 2006

Source: *SUGAR SHOCK!* by Connie Bennett www.sugarshock.com

Added by Rick:

WORSE STILL, the sugar will ferment and produce excess acidity, “intoxicating” ethanol alcohol and acetyl aldehyde, all 3 are POISONS and TOXIC to us!

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