

Name: _____

Dig Deeper: Be Sugar Smart Critical Thinking WORKSHEET



Americans consume on average 22 teaspoons of added sugar each day. Public health authorities are working to decrease sugar consumption as more and more scientific studies suggest a link between sugar consumption and chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes. Dig deeper into the issue of added sugar by answering the questions below.

1. What is the difference between natural and added sugar?

2. Sugar tariffs in the late 1970s caused the price of imported sugar to increase and as a result gave rise to high fructose corn syrup as a low-cost sweetener in foods. In more recent years, high fructose corn syrup has been perceived as much more unhealthy than "natural" sugar like sugar cane or honey. Is there any difference between sugar and corn syrup? Should consumers care about what type of added sugar is in their food?

3. Public health officials have begun to take action to reduce the amount of sugar that Americans consume by changing dietary guidelines, requiring a listing of added sugar on Nutrition Facts labels, and in some states and cities, taxing soda and banning the use of food stamps to purchase sugary drinks. Do you think the government should place these restrictions on sugar? Do you think these restrictions have an impact on people's behavior?



Dig Deeper: Be Sugar Smart Critical Thinking

ANSWER KEY



Americans consume on average 22 teaspoons of added sugar each day. Public health authorities are working to decrease sugar consumption as more and more scientific studies suggest a link between sugar consumption and chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes. Dig deeper into the issue of added sugar by answering the questions below.

1. What is the difference between natural and added sugar?

“Natural sugar” is found in foods that naturally contain sugar, along with other nutrients that benefit your body like vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water. Foods that contain natural sugar include fruits, vegetables, and dairy products like milk and yogurt.

“Added sugars” are the sugars that are added to foods beyond what occurs naturally. These foods are usually highly processed, and include candy and sugary drinks. They are high in sugar, but low in nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and fiber that help keep our bodies healthy. These foods and drinks are often considered “empty calories” or “junk food.”

2. Sugar tariffs in the late 1970s caused the price of imported sugar to increase and as a result gave rise to high fructose corn syrup as a low-cost sweetener in foods. In more recent years, high fructose corn syrup has been perceived as much more unhealthy than “natural” sugar like sugar cane or honey. Is there any difference between sugar and corn syrup? Should consumers care about what type of added sugar is in their food?

High fructose corn syrup is a blend of glucose and fructose. Table sugar is a form of sucrose, which is equal parts glucose and fructose. From a scientific standpoint, they’re virtually the same thing. Scientific studies consistently show there is no difference in the impact on human health from high fructose corn syrup when compared to other sweeteners. While some sweeteners like honey provide trace amounts of body-benefiting nutrients, it’s more important to limit all sources of added sugars. Natural sugars in fruits, vegetables, and dairy products also provide the body with additional vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

3. Public health officials have begun to take action to reduce the amount of sugar that Americans consume by changing dietary guidelines, requiring a listing of added sugar on Nutrition Facts labels, and in some states and cities, taxing soda and banning the use of food stamps to purchase sugary drinks. Do you think the government should place these restrictions on sugar? Do you think these restrictions have an impact on people's behavior?

Answers will vary based on student opinion.

