

Moderate sugar intake is okay for healthy people

SOUTHAMPTON — Most of us will confess to having a "sweet tooth" despite pedagogic information that warns against over-consumption of sugar-sweetened foods. This warning is then followed by recommendations of some groups to decrease intake of simple carbohydrates (sugars) and increase intake of complex carbohydrates (starches).

As a basis for these recommendations, they say the body can distinguish between a glucose molecule from starch and one from refined sugar and other caloric sweeteners; or the body can distinguish between a sucrose molecule from fruit, and one from refined sugar and other caloric sweeteners; or refined sugars and other caloric sweeteners lack components found in complex carbohydrates or "naturally occurring" sugars; or refined sugars

contain harmful substances when consumed in large amounts.

There is no evidence, says Dairy Council Inc., to support any of these assumptions.

Refined sugar and other caloric sweeteners refer to refined cane and beet sugars, syrups, corn sugar (dextrose), molasses, honey, sorghum, and maple products.

From a nutritional standpoint, refined sugars and sweeteners are not necessarily a problem for the healthy individual unless: they provide more energy than the body needs to maintain energy balance; their consumption results in exclusion of more nutritious foods to the point of an inadequate diet; and sugars are consumed in a quantity or frequency to encourage dental caries.

Dental decay occurs with the help of a glue-like substance called

plaque—a thin, colorless layer of bacteria that constantly forms on the teeth. Plaque breaks down the sugars from food and changes the sugars to form acid. This sticky plaque then holds the acid to your teeth, allowing it to attack tooth enamel.

One very important factor surrounding development of dental caries is the length of time teeth are exposed to this acid environment. Determinants influencing exposure length are frequency and form of sugar consumption. The more frequently sugar is consumed, the longer the teeth are exposed to the acid environment, and the greater the chances for decay. Foods such as honey or caramel stick to the teeth and are more cariogenic because they expose the teeth to acid for a longer period of time than do foods that can be cleared from the

mouth.

Dairy Council recommends eating sugared foods with a meal rather than between meals. Other foods have a buffering effect on acid production and decrease acid potential of sugar.

Empirical evidence has suggested a relationship between refined sugar and children's behavior, namely hyperactivity. Running, climbing, and fidgeting are behaviors common to all children at one time or another. The difference between the behavior of a pathological hyperactive child and one who is normal is more in degree and cause than in behavior type. Until more is learned about the actual cause of hyperactivity, there is no scientific evidence to support the theory that sugar causes behavioral disorders.

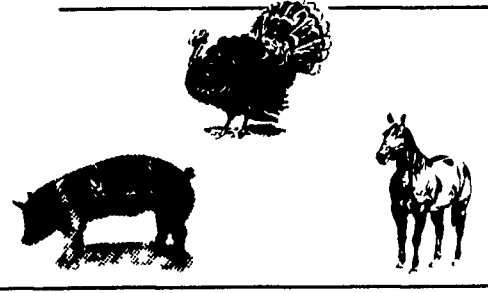
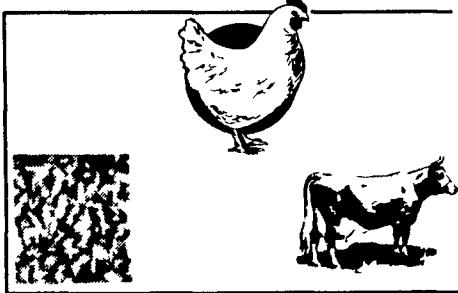
Sugared foods, of and by

themselves, and consumed in moderation are not necessarily detrimental to the normal individual's health. It is recommended, says Dairy Council, that people consume a wide variety of foods from the four food groups—milk and dairy products, meats, fruits and vegetables, and grains—to ensure adequate nutrient intake without consumption of energy beyond that needed to maintain metabolic balance.

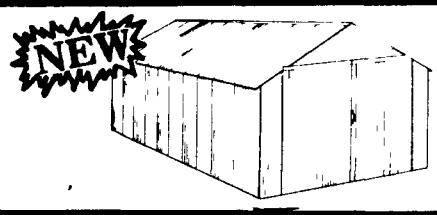


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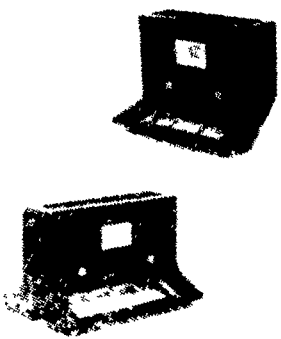
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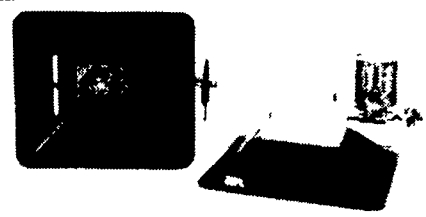


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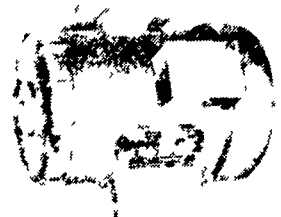
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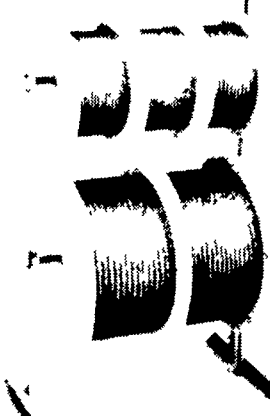
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