



Making Americans Sick

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius promised, "The U.S. government plans to increase funding to battle obesity and views healthcare reform as an opportunity to encourage better eating habits." Rather than spending money and attacking the food industry, the secretary and others concerned with the health of Americans ought to go after the U.S. Congress. Let's look at it.

According to a study by researchers at the University of California, Davis, published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* (May 2009), widespread use of fructose may be directly responsible for some of the ongoing increase in rates of childhood diabetes and obesity. Consuming fructose-sweetened, not sucrose-sweetened, beverages increases abdominal fat and decreases insulin sensitivity in overweight/obese people. The participants in the study who consumed fructose-sweetened food showed an increase of fat cells around major organs including their hearts and livers, and also underwent metabolic changes that are precursors to heart disease and diabetes.

Other studies have linked diets rich in high-fructose corn syrup to elevated risks of high triglycerides (a type of blood fat), fat buildup in the liver and insulin resistance, notes Dr. Gerald Shulman and his colleagues at Yale University School of Medicine.

"This is the first evidence we have that fructose increases diabetes and heart disease independently from causing simple weight gain," said Kimber Stanhope, a molecular biologist who led the UC Davis study, adding, "We didn't see any of these changes in the people eating glucose."

You say, "Williams, sucrose, fructose — what's the fuss?" Sucrose is the sugar sold in 5- or 10-pound bags at your supermarket that Americans have used as a sweetener throughout most of our history. Fructose is a sweetener that has more recently come into heavy use by beverage manufacturers and food processors. You ask, "How come all the fructose use now?"

Enter the U.S. Congress. The Fanjul family of Palm Beach, Fla., a politically connected family, has given more than \$1.8 million to both Democratic and Republican parties over the years. They and others in the sugar industry give millions to congressmen to keep high tariffs on foreign sugar so the U.S. sugar industry can charge us higher prices. According to one study, the Fanjul family alone earns about \$65 million a year from congressional protectionism.

Chairman Emeritus of Archer Daniels Midland Company, Dwayne Andreas, has given politicians millions of dollars to help him enrich ADM at our expense. For that money, congressmen vote to restrict sugar imports that in turn drive up sugar prices. Higher sugar prices benefit ADM, who produces corn syrup (fructose), which is a sugar substitute. When sugar prices are high, sugar users (soda, candy and food processors) turn to corn syrup as a cheaper substitute sweetener. Early on, some sugar-using companies found out they could import products like ice tea, distill out its sugar content and still beat the high prices caused by Congress' protectionist sugar policy, but to do so was eventually made illegal.

Congress' sugar policy not only reduces the health of American people, it reduces American jobs as well. Chicago used to be America's candy manufacturing capitol. In 1970, employment by Chicago's candy manufacturers totaled 15,000 and now it's 8,000 and falling. Brach's used to employ about 2,300 people; now most of its jobs are in Mexico. Ferrara Pan Candy has also moved much of its production to Mexico. Yes, wages are lower in Mexico, but wages aren't the only factor in candy manufacturers' flight from America. Sugar is a major cost and in Mexico, they pay one-third to one-half what they pay in the U.S. Life Savers, which for 90 years was manufactured in America, has moved to Canada, where wages



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are comparable to ours, but their yearly sugar cost is \$10 million less.

Working in the favor of Congress with these and other life-threatening and health-reducing schemes is American unawareness and the fact that most often, their victims are invisible.

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