

NUTRITION NEWS & NOTES

A Sugar By Any Other Name...

(NAPSA)—Do you regularly read the labels on the grocery products you purchase? If so, you've probably seen a common ingredient found in many of your brand-name foods: high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

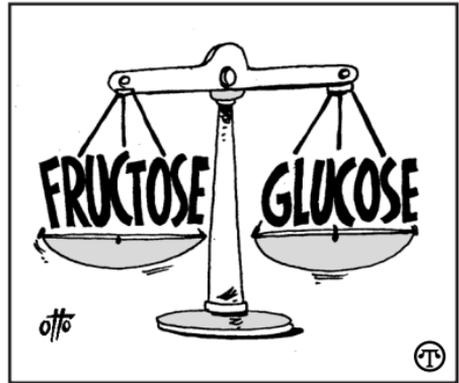
What exactly is HFCS? It's actually not much different than regular table sugar (also called sucrose).

According to the International Food Information Council (IFIC), both HFCS and sucrose are made up of almost a 50/50 blend of fructose and glucose. Both products are also four calories per gram and about equally as sweet. As such, there is no evidence to suggest the dietary impact of consuming HFCS is any different than the dietary impact of consuming sucrose.

Why, then, do some products, like soft drinks, use HFCS instead of sugar? According to IFIC, it's because of the ability of HFCS to "better blend with other food and beverage ingredients." Despite these favorable attributes, sugar subsidies and trade tariffs prevent HFCS from being sold in many other continents, such as Europe.

As Americans look to combat this country's rising obesity rates, should they be concerned about any differences in consuming HFCS instead of sugar? Not at all. Remember, both products are composed of almost equal portions of fructose and glucose.

This means that a person consuming soft drinks in Europe (where HFCS is not used) shouldn't experience any dietary differences than a person consuming the same number of soft drinks here in the U.S. In fact, the preva-



lence of obesity has increased by about ten to forty percent in the majority of European countries during the past ten years—despite the absence of HFCS.

If Americans truly want to combat obesity, they should be concerned with how many calories they consume each day, rather than labeling certain foods and nutrients "good" or "bad."

According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA), "obesity is a complex problem and its cause cannot be simply attributed to any one component of the food supply."

Despite its complexity, however, the ADA also says that, "obesity arises from the energy imbalance caused by taking in too much energy and using too little." In other words, people become obese when they consume too many calories and don't get enough exercise.

The key word is "balance." The best way for Americans to combat obesity is to substantially increase physical activity while enjoying balanced diets and moderate consumption of all foods and beverages—including HFCS.

For more detailed information on high fructose corn syrup, please visit www.hfcsfacts.com.