

## High Blood Pressure? Sugar, Not Salt, May Be The Culprit!

Compelling evidence from basic science, population studies, and clinical trials implicate sugars, and particularly the monosaccharide fructose, as playing a major role in the development of hypertension. Moreover, evidence suggests that sugars in general and fructose in particular may contribute to overall cardiovascular risk through a variety of mechanisms.



Sucrose, or table sugar, is composed of two simple sugars: glucose and fructose. Sucrose is a common ingredient in industrially processed foods, but not as common as another sweetener: high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

Whereas sucrose is equal parts fructose and glucose, HFCS has more fructose (usually 55%) than glucose (the remaining 45%) and is the most frequently used sweetener in processed foods - particularly in fruit drinks and sodas.

Ingesting one 24-ounce soft drink has been shown to cause an average maximum increase in blood pressure of 15/9 mm Hg and heart rate of 9 bpm. For some, the effects can be seen from 30 minutes to 2 hours after drinking a caffeinated drink.

Intake of refined sugars (*which by the way have no real nutritional value*) in the typical American diet is approximately two to eight times higher than current recommendations. Just as most dietary sodium does not come from the salt shaker, most dietary sugar does not come from the sugar bowl. Instead, overconsumption of processed foods is a significant contributor to dietary sugar.

Besides sweets, candies and sweetened beverages there is also sugar in foods like breads, ketchup, and canned fruit. White starches like white flour and pasta are also recognized by the body as sugar.



Reducing consumption of processed foods that contain added sugars is a great place to start eliminating excess refined carbs. Limiting or eliminating high fructose corn syrup from your diet is another excellent, but slightly more challenging goal as well.

Yes, whole fruits like grapes, bananas and dates contain sugar too. Good news! Consuming sugars - including fructose - in their naturally occurring state (i.e. as whole fruits) is actually beneficial. So eat up!!

Information Sources:

[Harvard Health Publications](#)  
[Medical News Today](#)  
[Mayo Clinic](#)  
[NIH Public Medical Library](#)