

The energetics of food's sweetness: understanding the nature of sweet flavour in health and illness

This article is an attempt to clarify the energetic quality of the sweet flavour and some key issues relating to intake of the different aspects of our diet. When we are talking about energetics we are looking from a platform that encompasses a great deal of fragmented food concepts in Western language. These are: carbohydrates, fats and proteins, vitamins and minerals. However, looking at things from this fragmented model has nothing to do with the actual sense of taste, the taste is all we really need to know about the food and taste is something we do with our whole body not just the tongue.

When we think of food, the fundamental taste we have always been interested in is sweetness, so food essentially is sweetness and in ancient cultures is associated with this flavour, so looking into the energetics of food is to look into the nature of the sweet flavour. In Western concepts this sweetness is described primarily as a carbohydrate, these come in several forms but broadly there is refined and unrefined. The refined carbs have gone through a process of breaking them down into parts making them more concentrated. Unrefined are less concentrated, retaining more of what Western concepts call "fibre" which is really a kind of substance or material that energetically holds the flavour. When we separate the fibre and just have the sweetness we are forming something refined and concentrated. I am not looking to be "scientific" here but merely wanting to clarify energetics, not science. Broadly there are two forms of these concentrated carbohydrates: fruit sugar/fructose and what I will broadly call "other-sugars" and the difference in these two categories is what we initially need to sense on our journey from refined to unrefined sweetness. (For a western science ideology about this please see: here:- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnniua6-oM&feature=relmfu>)

When one tastes these refined ingredients there is a very key difference to them, the taste of the "other-sugars" is that of a strong sweet flavour that lingers in the mouth for a while before it starts to disappear, also it takes more time to break down in the saliva of the mouth. However fructose has an immediate and much sweeter flavour than the "other-sugars" category, it doesn't stay too long and there is a bitter aftertaste as if the sugar has de-natured in the mouth. Honey is a similar but very much more wholesome and unrefined expression of fructose. The fructose-based carbs get a very bad press and rightly so, since the nature of its products have been over-used for many years and particularly the last fifty or so. However we must be very clear about the nature of the flavours of these different expressions and what they actually mean for us. The way to do this is to try and get a sense of the nature of these different sweetnesses and how much or how little of them the body actually wants and why.

As a fundamental principle in energetic medicine the principal flavour that foods in our diet must to some extent contain is sweet. However, by sweet here we generally mean a content of strong and long-lasting sweetness, something that will keep us going, that feels "full" in flavour and doesn't disappear instantly. The nature of these things moves us towards the "other-sugars" category, the less-sweet forms of sweetness that importantly the body powers itself on for energy. All foods have "other-sugars" in them and so glucose/maltose/lactose and the like we can call the beginning of true-sweet flavour, the flavour of energy if you like. The main difference

is between this and what we might call harsh-sweetness and this comes from fructose. If one tastes either fructose, which is a major component of refined sugar (beet or cane sugar or corn syrup) or even honey, there is a huge difference between this and say malt extract or the like which has more “maltose” content, (this is one of the “other-sugars” category). Even though both products have undergone refinement to some degree, the difference between the fruit-based compounds (fructose) and in this case the grain-sugar of malt is clear. The immediate “high” of the fructose is associated more with something like that of alcohol, there is a similar energetic quality to these substances. Alcohol comes from the fermentation process of any carbohydrate or sweet flavour, so its when the sweetness is taken to its extremity or ripened to its “fruition”. Fructose and alcohol therefore should be seen in a similar way and interestingly in nature they are often found together.

When apples rot under a tree or when any fruit lies on the ground and is fermenting we can smell the alcoholic content of the air around the tree, this may well have been how the first alcohols were known and produced from. It is well-known for the tigers of Indonesia to be “affected” on the fruit of the Durian or elephants in Africa to become “affected” on the fruit of the Manula. The point is that fruit, fructose and alcohol have a close relation to each other. They are sugars that occur at a particular time of the year, the nature of the content of these sugars is about the peak of the year, the summer and end of summer where the fruits are ripened and the energy is at the highest, fruit consumption in the wild therefore naturally occurs at the end of the summer and into the autumn season. Also many fruit trees have a very short season, they are not producing all year, fruits can’t be stored, they just rot away, and all of these expressions points to the nature of something that is very fast-acting and specific to a season of sweaty summer heat, activity and expressiveness of energy of the season or, in the tropics, a situation of this all the time.

As we move from the refined “other-sugar” category that includes things like “maltose”, fruit and vegetable juices especially of the sweet fruit/ vegetables, white breads and white flours, and on to the unrefined carbs we find there is still sweetness but it is less strong and more full in a deep way, these can be tasted in cooked and uncooked root vegetables and also in slowly cooked onions etc. These kind of sweet flavours are very satisfying and long-lasting, they are not the quick hit of the harsh-sugars, these really taste and feel full in the body. One can actually have a meal on the basis of these kind of sweetnesses whereas a meal based in fruit juices and sweets or even of white breads and “other-sugar” type malts and spreads just leave you feeling hungry or undernourished, you always need more.

Unrefined carbs such as grains and vegetables nuts and seeds and even dairy feed the body in a deeper way. So simply we can list a chart of the nature of the sweet flavoured foods and how much they power the body. At the top of the chart we can put the harsh-sweet flavours, these give of an initial effect but there is a limit to the actual energy they can supply to the body. As we go down from fructose to glucose to maltose and lactose and into the unrefined we increase the available energy and the depth of flavour of the sweetness.....

Fructose and alcohol

Sucrose - combines *fructose* and glucose
(Cane/ Corn and beet sugar- Dextrose/ Invert)
Honey - combines *fructose* and glucose (plus other sugars)

Initial-sweet, but harsh-sweet, no longevity =
condiment/ herb

“other sugars” -refined:

(includes: pure Glucose, Maltose, dextrin, Lactose, refined white flour products, fruit and sweet-vegetable juices and many derivatives)

Less-sweet but full-sweet. Longevity.=
Food

Unrefined sweetness:

Whole Grains and their products, vegetables, green vegetable juices, whole-fruits and nuts, and dairy.

Not-sweet unrefined: Herbs, some vegetables and other produce which are not refined but also cannot be called foods eg. coffee, cacao, herbs and spices, pickles and vinegars, natural cultured products to aid digestion.

Not sweet, and so not-food but used to add flavour or as a medicinal **herb/ condiment:** Bitter, spicy/ acrid, salty and sour flavours.

Not-sweet refined drugs and supplements:

Extreme and generally toxic derivatives of herbs and plant/ animal matter. These are as aggressive a sugar to body but using the other flavours of: Bitter, sour, salty and spicy/ acrid.

Not-sweet refined **drugs.**

The point of the above is not to see anything as “good” or “bad”. This is no such thing as good and bad in nature so why should we adhere to this ideology, let’s just look at what it *is*. Looking at the above we can see what a food is in relation to what a condiment is, or something that is added in small amounts for taste. The refined sugars have been used for thousands of years but they are used as a particular energetic tonic. The condiment of the initial sweet flavour was used to deliver a kick-start to the digestive process just as alcohol would have been used in a similar way but only in small amounts and not intended for long-term use. It was seen as a drug and used in the way salt might be used to affect a dish or food substance. The problem in the dietary systems of much of the world and the incessant chatter about which diet is “good” is simply that we have mixed up a condiment for a food-stuff. It’s like going to a supermarket and buying a whole lot of peppercorns to eat rather than some actual food, the point is about the proportions. Rather than this being about everything in “moderation” it is about everything relative to its nature.

Foods that are heavily refined have a lot of content in them so the high-sweet flavours above are highly concentrated sweetness and therefore only a little needs to be used. While far less refined similar is of foods such as meats, eggs, fish and cheeses, all of these are high concentration, a lot of energy in one small package. So meat is a very large amount of grass, eggs are a very large amount of grain and insects and some vegetables, cheese has a huge amount of vegetable material to make up its content. In the same way salt and sugar are highly concentrated and so need to be taken with a lot of water and other ingredients to diffuse their content. A curry that contained only spices just wouldn’t be edible. Spices also are highly concentrated foods, this is why they move into the category of being herbs/condiments and many of the spices we use would actually have been herbs and are still used as such today in Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, ancient Greek medicine and all indigenous medicines. The point is that when something has a high concentration one has to dilute it or it tastes and feels too strong.

Notice in the above diagram the unrefined sweetness is at the centre or balance point where as the high sugar is balanced out by its opposite the refined drug...this is exactly what we see in society today. Because we have become used to the high-impact sweet flavour it is an interesting experiment to see what it’s like to focus on it as a condiment rather than a food, but once food is clearly sensed and understood the other categories of condiment/herb or concentrated food become clearer. A man who has spent much of his life involved in understanding the true nature of instinctive eating is Steve Gagné and I strongly recommend you investigate food through the senses as an experiment (please see: <http://www.stevegagne.com/>). When we lose our sense and feel for food this is when illnesses can set in, such as obesity and heart disease for example. The process of a high-fructose diet basically creates fatty tissue in the body that cannot be shifted easily. If we used salt the way we use sugar then deaths would be a normality, it’s just with fructose-based sugars there is a slower process to death due to their consumption, but chronically it affects the body in the same way as does high content of any refined or high concentration condiment or herb. A small dose can stimulate, a large dose can kill. So none of these foodstuffs is our enemy, we just have to understand them.

This also relates to cancer. The main focus with cancer has been on “lowering the sugar content of the blood” but this is actually the same for everyone. What is

required in cancer is a body functioning on food not condiments, so if we change the diet to ensure the body is actually getting a diet rather than getting the drug/herb of sugar then we can have a situation where cancer is less prevalent. To reduce all blood-sugar content and “starve” the tumour also starves the body as the body requires sweetness to live. So an over-zealous approach to drastically reducing all intake of sweetness in foods is again ridiculous as this is a focusing on the tumour rather than on the patient as a whole and as a result completely loses the complete picture of what’s going on. Tumour reduction is about the long-term not the short-term process, especially with people who have low digestive and immune (energy) function.

Once a diet that works for the body is set, then the body generates enough energy to clear itself of unwanted materials such as cancer, so it’s about getting the diet that works for the specific individual’s metabolic nature/constitution and this will therefore not be the same for each person. People are not statistics so to use a one-diet-fits-all programme is akin to thinking that everyone is called Joe and aged 34. So when it comes to the nature of diet it will be flexible to the constitution as well as to the specific nature of a person’s situation at any given time. Dr. Peter D’Adamo’s Blood Group Diet is the first expression in the West of a consideration of constitution and diet, this information is useful in today’s multi-cultural society. In India the 3-doshas and in China the 5-constitutions used to be easily definable and had local lineage and location to specific regions, now they do not.

The point is that when it comes to sweetness we need to decipher the spectrum of sweetness, to clearly understand the taste difference of when something moves from the deep sweetness of slow-cooked onions to the immediate impact of fruit-sugars and concentrated juiced beverages. These substances are very hard for the body to digest because the body itself doesn’t “juice”, the body chews and swallows. This is not an indictment of the process of juicing but it is very important to realise that when one is taking a juice this is now a refined product, it is no longer a food the way it was a moment ago. The amount of refinement that is taken in is generally the problem with diet overall. If refinement is cut down upon and diet is “normalized” as it was even a hundred years ago, there begins the situation of eating what there is around you locally and eating foods in season, without a diet focused on refined condiments as a replacement for actual food. You know the old saying our mum told us: “don’t eat sweets now, it will spoil your dinner!” well it still holds!

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