

## HARMFUL INGREDIENTS

### SUGAR

Sugar can be harmful to a child's diet because it causes cavities, it dulls a child's appetite for healthy food, and it gives a false sense to a child of being full. The slogan of Snickers candy bar "Snickers satisfies you" holds true mostly due to the sugar in the candy bar.

The effects of sugar have been discussed and analyzed many times. However, as of the present time, there is no conclusive evidence as to sugar actually being harmful. However, we do know that sugar contributes to tooth decay and is eaten many times as a substitute for more nutritional food.

It may be interesting to show students the actual amount of sugar found in various foods they consume:

Plain Donut=2 1/2 Tbsp.	1 glass chocolate milk=2 Tbsp.
Roll of life savers=1 1/2 Tbsp.	Small soda=1 1/2 Tbsp.
Small sucker=1/2 tsp.	Ice cream cone=1 1/2 Tbsp.
1 Tbsp. jam=1 Tbsp.	1 gum drop=1/2 Tbsp.
stick gum=1/2 tsp.	Popsicle=2 1/2 Tbsp.

Sugar affects the blood sugar level in the bloodstream, which can create liver problems and disorders. Sugar also affects the brain and energy level. The brain requires a steady supply of "food," which is glucose (sugar). The best type of sugar for the body is complex sugar, or starch. If the brain does not have a steady supply of glucose, it causes an individual to become tired. However, if an oversupply or rush of sugar enters the bloodstream, the mind becomes overcharged, overexcited, and overstressed.

Sugar is found naturally in many foods that children consume. Children usually enjoy fruit more than vegetables because fruit is sweeter due to the natural sugars found in them. As stated before, our bodies need sugar, and natural sugars are the best form. Refined sugar, such as table sugar and artificial sweeteners, are the ones to avoid. Pediatricians report that limiting refined sugar and artificial sweeteners in the diet of children will improve their behavior and ability to think. If any sweeteners are to be used in food for children, it should be brown sugar or molasses. (Remember, honey should not be given to children under the age of 2 years old.)

### CHOCOLATE

Chocolate is made from the cacao bean. This bean contains an alkaloid chemical that is just as stimulating as the one found in coffee. One ounce of pure chocolate also contains 20 mg of caffeine, another stimulant. Therefore, chocolate causes children to be hyperactive, irritable, aggressive, defiant, and listless. It also adversely affects the metabolic rate and places strain on the liver.

Some researchers also believe that chocolate can become addicting due to the stimulants in it.

There is a chocolate substitute called carob, which does not have the stimulating and addicting chemicals of chocolate. Carob is available in health food and department stores.

#### CAFFEINE

Caffeine interferes with a child's hearing or auditory perception. It impairs a child's eye-hand coordination. It causes mental confusion and poor concentration. Hyperactivity is observed in children with high levels of caffeine in their bloodstream. These children also display extreme nervousness, anxiety, and fatigue.

Chocolate and pop are the foods that children consume that contain caffeine. Colas are the obvious sodas with caffeine. There are 40-54 mg of caffeine in every cola-type soda pop. This is equivalent to the caffeine found in a half-cup of coffee. Colas are not the only type of soda pop that has caffeine. Check ingredient lists to find if the soda pop contains caffeine.

#### ADDITIVES

Additives, such as artificial food colorings, artificial flavoring, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and salt, have been linked to hyperactivity, illness, and decreased attention spans in children. MSG also creates problems for children with allergies.

#### HONEY

NO honey should be given to children under the age of two years old. Infant botulism is associated with the death of infants who have consumed tainted honey.