

LEVELED Book • P

# Sugar, Sugar, Everywhere

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level  
J•M•P

Written by Susan Lennox

# **Sugar, Sugar, Everywhere**



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## **Focus Question**

**What happens to our bodies  
when we eat sugar?**

## Words to Know

bland

bloodstream

diabetes

fructose

fuels

glucose

lactose

prepared

sucrose

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## Introduction

Do you have a sweet tooth? Do you like gooey desserts and sugary treats? If you do, you are not alone.

Studies show that most people love sweets. The average American, for example, eats just over 150 pounds (68 kg) of sugar a year. Yet people are not always aware they are eating sugar. That's because sugar can be found in foods they wouldn't expect.



Sugar is in most sweet snacks.

## What Is Sugar?

Sugar is a natural ingredient in plant foods and milk. The sugar found in milk is **lactose**. The sugar found in most grains, fruits, and vegetables is **fructose**. Apples, pears, and grapes are naturally full of sugar. Starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and yams, contain even more.

The white crystals people sprinkle on cereal and in coffee are table sugar. Table sugar is **sucrose**. Sucrose comes from sugar cane or sugar beets.



A worker cuts sugar cane (left). A farmer holds a sugar beet (right).

Sugar cane is a tall grass that grows in warm parts of the world. Farms on Pacific and Caribbean islands grow sugar cane. Sugar beets are root vegetables that grow in cooler parts of Europe and North America.

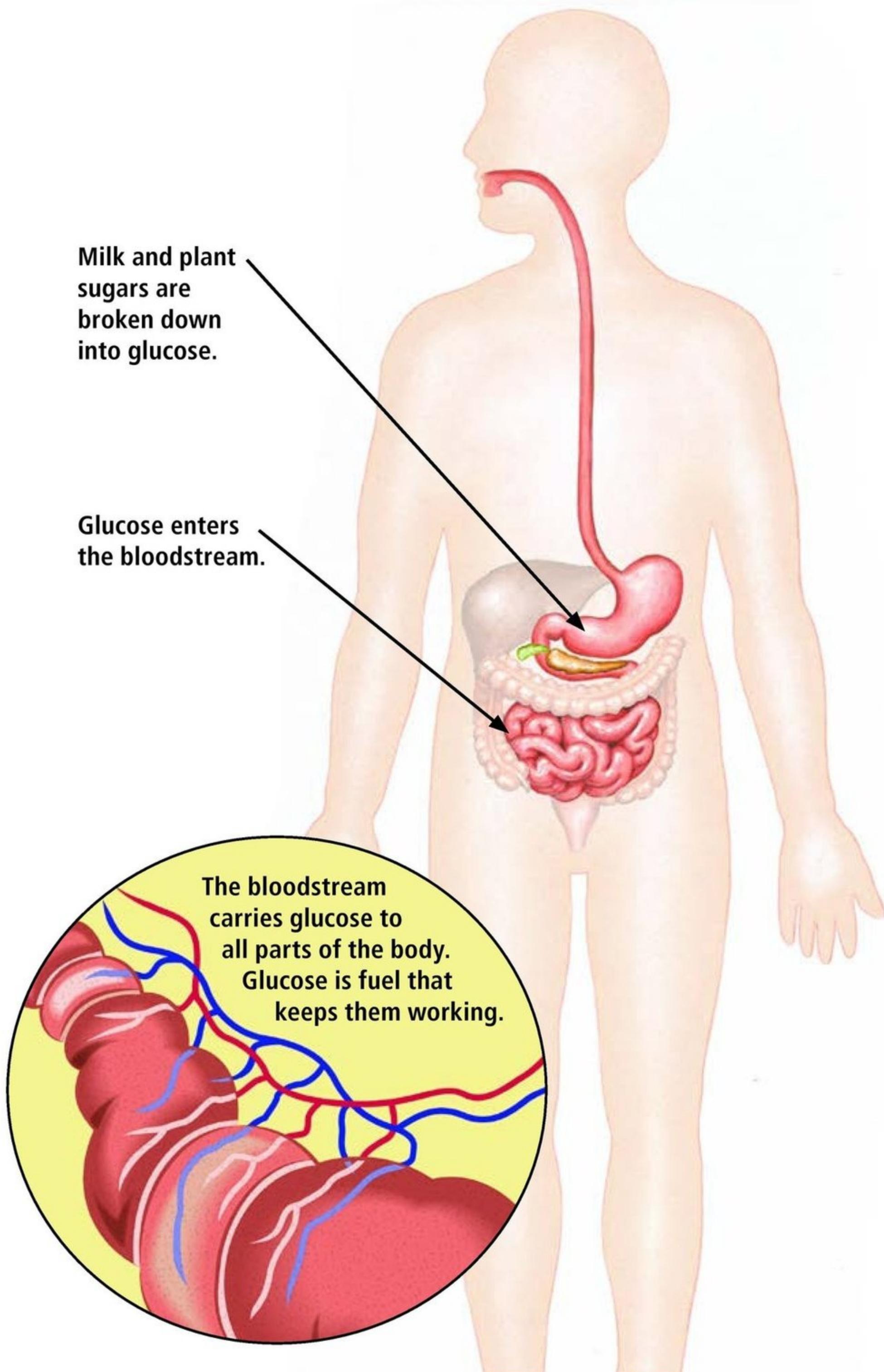
The lactose, fructose, or sucrose molecules in food are bonded together. When we eat, the body breaks apart the bonds and turns those sugars into a simpler form of sugar called **glucose**. Glucose enters the **bloodstream** and is carried through the body.

Glucose in the bloodstream is food for cells. It provides energy for working muscles and organs. The body needs glucose to stay alive.

### WORD WISE

Notice that *lactose*, *fructose*, *sucrose*, and *glucose* all have the same ending. The suffix *-ose* identifies things as sugars.

# What Happens to Sugar We Eat?



## Hiding in Plain Sight

Our bodies want sugar because it is a good source of energy. The body can get all the sugar it needs from naturally sweet and starchy foods. Modern diets, however, include plenty of foods that contain not only natural sugar but also added sugar. It should come as no surprise that cakes, cookies, ice cream, and candy are full of added sugar. Sugar is also added to foods you might not expect.



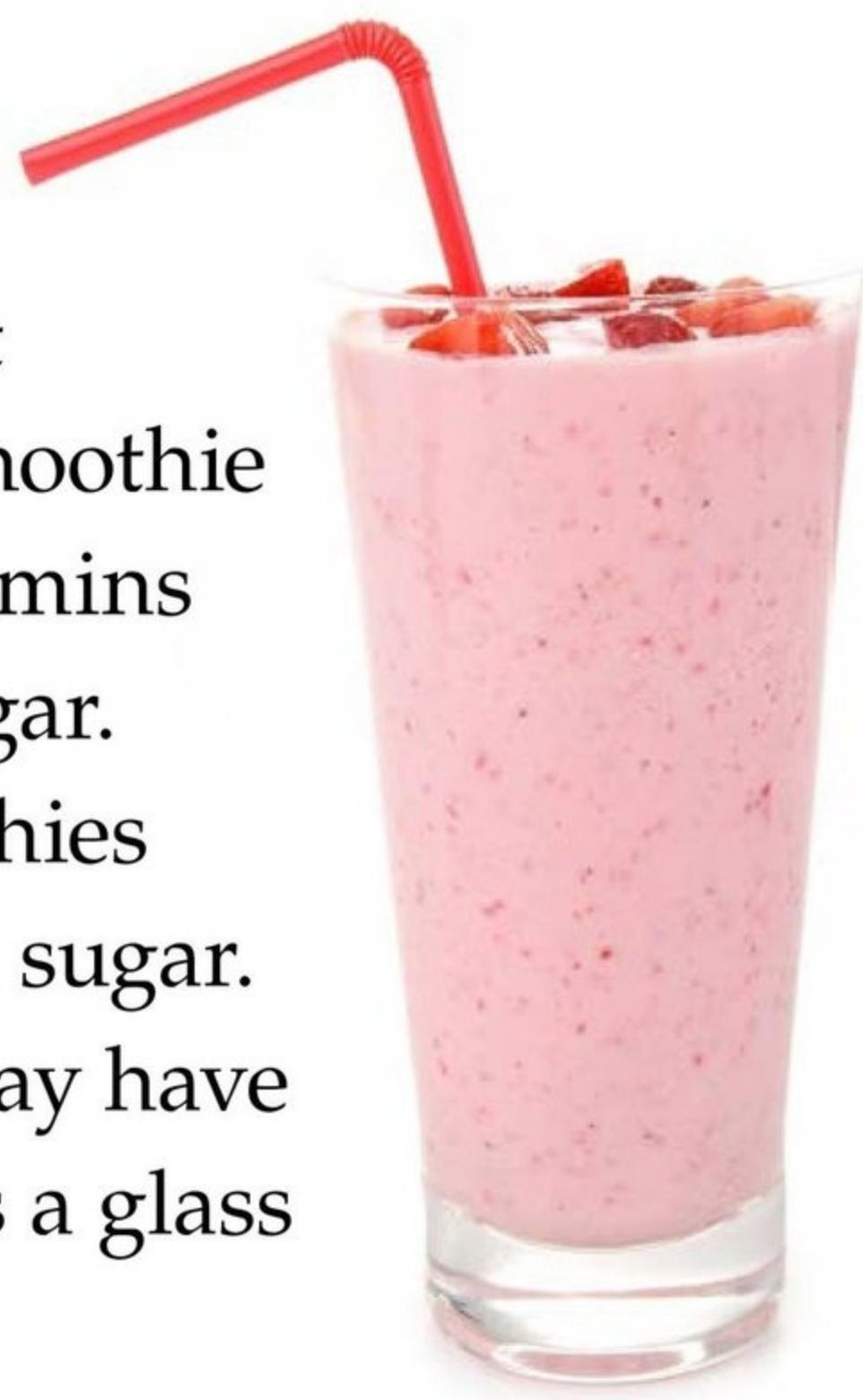
**Prepared** tomato products like pasta sauce and ketchup often have added sugar. Tomatoes contain acids that can give them a bitter taste when they are cooked. To get rid of that bitter taste, sugar is added during cooking.



Many people eat low-fat sauces and salad dressings to help them stay thin. They may not know that they are eating sugar instead of fat. Oils and fats add flavor to food.

When they are removed, the food can taste **bland**. To give fat-free foods flavor, sugar is added.

Instead of soda, many people choose to drink healthy fruit smoothies. A fruit smoothie does have lots of vitamins and some natural sugar. Some types of smoothies may also have added sugar. In fact, a smoothie may have just as much sugar as a glass of fizzy soda pop.





Many cereals have plenty of added sugar.

Breakfast cereal is another source of sugar. Many cereals have sweet bits of candied fruit or marshmallow added. Even cereals made of just plain flakes were probably given a dusting of sugar to make them taste sweeter.

### How much sugar is in your breakfast cereal?

1 cup	Grams of sugar
Shredded Wheat	0g
Toasted Oats	1g
Corn Flakes	2g
Crisp Rice	3g
Raisin Bran	18g



Eating too much sugar can cause problems.

## Too Much Can Be Too Bad

If sugar is such a great source of energy, how can too much of it be bad?

The body cannot just get rid of the sugar it does not use. Instead, it changes the sugar to fat and stores it for later. If too much sugar keeps coming into the body, more fat is produced.

A body that has too much fat is at risk for health problems. Extra pounds strain bones and muscles. The heart has to work hard to pump blood through a larger body. Fat can also clog blood vessels, forcing the heart to work even harder to push blood through them.

Eating too much sugar is a concern for everyone. People who have a condition known as **diabetes** (dy-uh-BEE-teez) must be especially careful about eating sugar. Their bodies have trouble processing sugar in the blood. Sugar levels in the blood can easily go too high or too low. These changes can harm organs like the kidneys and the heart.

## Cakes, Cookies...and Cars?

Sugar is packed with energy, and some scientists think it can be used to power cars. Researchers have created a mix of sugar and other chemicals that burns much more cleanly than gasoline. Who knows? Someday drivers might visit the supermarket instead of a gas station to fuel up!



## Searching Out the Sweet Stuff

So how can people guard against eating too much sugar?

One way is to eat more natural food and less prepared food. Naturally sweet fruits like grapes and peaches don't have any added sugar. It's also easier to keep tabs on sugar by eating homemade meals instead of prepared food. Cooking at home gives people more control over what goes into the food they eat.



It's easy to make healthy meals at home.

**INGREDIENTS:** WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, SUGAR, RICE FLOUR, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OIL, FRUCTOSE, MALTODEXTRIN, DEXTROSE, SALT, TRICALCIUM PHOSPHATE, CINNAMON, SOY LECITHIN, TRISODIUM PHOSPHATE, ANNATTO (FOR COLOR), CARAMEL COLOR, NATURAL FLAVOR, VITAMIN C (SODIUM ASCORBATE), NIACIN (NIACINAMIDE), REDUCED IRON, ZINC (ZINC OXIDE), VITAMIN A PALMITATE, VITAMIN B6 (PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE), VITAMIN B2 (RIBOFLAVIN), VITAMIN D, VITAMIN B1 (THIAMIN MONONITRATE), VITAMIN B12, FOLATE (FOLIC ACID), NONFAT MILK. BHT (TO PRESERVE FRESHNESS).

**CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK AND SOYBEAN INGREDIENTS.**

This food has sugar as one of its main ingredients.

Another way to limit sugar is to read labels on packaged foods. Most food labels have a list of ingredients. The ingredients are listed in order by the amount present in the food. If sugar is one of the first few ingredients listed, the product probably has plenty of it. People can compare labels on products to see which ones have more or less added sugar.



A little bit of sugar goes a long way!

Sugar makes food delicious, sweet, and tasty. It's what **fuels** our bodies and keeps us going. Too much sugar can also slow us down if we're not careful. That's why it's important to pay attention to what we eat. Sugar can be almost anywhere!

## Glossary

<b>bland</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	lacking distinct flavor; uninteresting (p. 9)
<b>bloodstream</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the flow of blood that moves through the body of a person or other animal (p. 6)
<b>diabetes</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a disease in which the body cannot properly control the amount of sugar in the blood (p. 12)
<b>fructose</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a very sweet sugar found in fruits (p. 5)
<b>fuels</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	supplies power, energy, or strength (p. 15)
<b>glucose</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a simple sugar that is a major energy source for the body (p. 6)
<b>lactose</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a sugar found in milk (p. 5)
<b>prepared</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	made ready for use; completed earlier (p. 8)
<b>sucrose</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a sugar found in sugar cane and sugar beets, often used in cooking and baking; white table sugar (p. 5)

# Sugar, Sugar, Everywhere

A Reading A-Z Level P Leveled Book

Word Count: 823

## Connections

### Writing

Plan a meal with healthy food. Write a paragraph describing what food you will serve and why it is healthy.

### Math

What kinds of healthy snacks do your classmates like? Make a list. Then organize the data in a bar graph.

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