

# Labeling the Hazards of Modern Eating

BY DR. JEFF CLARK, ND

Fall of 2014 is shaping up to be an important decision point for requiring food labeling to enable your right to know what you are being fed. There is a repeating pattern of labeling debates within the rule making halls of the FDA in DC, and in the public square around ballot measure 92 in Oregon. On the one side there is a public demand that we have the right to know what is in our food, clearly marked on the label. On the other side are corporate interests pushing back saying “we shouldn’t be required to alert consumers to our practices since no one has proven to our satisfaction we are causing harm”

At the FDA the debate is about sugars added to pre-processed foods. The FDA wants “added sugars” and their quantity and calories to be a distinct item in the nutrition summary box. The sugar interests do not want this clarity placed on package labels. Food processors argue that the current requirement to include specific names of ingredients and the accounting of total sugar in the product is sufficient. Here is a partial list of ingredient names that indicate added sugars: anhydrous dextrose, brown sugar, confectioner’s powdered sugar, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, maple syrup, molasses, nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar), pancake syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, white granulated sugar, cane juice, evaporated corn sweetener, fruit juice concentrate, crystal dextrose, glucose, liquid fructose, sugar cane juice, and fruit nectar.

A recent estimate is that 80% of packaged foods contain added sugars under one or more of these ingredient labels. Why is being unclear about the amount of added sugar a problem? In a headline: “The obesity crisis.”



The obesity crisis we are currently experiencing in the USA has a definitive start. In 1980 the US Government along with leading medical authorities at the time published the first “healthy” eating guidelines. With an assist from the sugar industry, naturally occurring fats in food were vilified as the main cause of heart disease and food processors rushed to adapt. They quickly realized that if the natural fat is simply removed from a food, no one wants to eat what is left. So fat came out and refined sugars went in as a tradeoff that got people to eat, and boy did we eat. As a population we are now 2/3 overweight and/or obese and still growing!

We know from our practice in Tualatin that people overeat because eating refined sugars creates excessive hunger. The FDA is on the right track, and we sincerely hope they hold the line and require this clear labeling of the quantity of sugars added to foods.

The voters of Oregon have the opportunity to join the courageous people of Vermont in requiring foods that contain genetically engineered organisms, commonly called GMOs, be specifically labeled.

I find myself in the awkward position of being a pro-GMO labeling moderate. I’ve not yet found a health reason to want to avoid Hawaiian papaya that has been genetically engineered for disease resistance against a virus that had devastated the orchards there. Most non-organic zucchini has been similarly modified for disease resistance. In the future there may be GMO foods that we seek out for added nutritional benefits such as “golden rice” that is currently aimed at vitamin A deficiency in developing countries. After these past few years here in the Western USA only a purist can be against developing drought resistant food plants.

None of this “feel goodness” excuses the 90%+ of GMOs that are currently being slipped into our diets unlabeled – that is Round up Ready (RuR) soy, corn and sugar beets. Every plant sprayed

with Roundup absorbs the herbicide through its foliage. Non-resistant weeds die, RuR GMO plants survive and incorporate the herbicide into the food supply. This herbicide enters the food we eat in a way that cannot be washed off, at levels that affect our sex hormones. This herbicide is a synthetic estrogen. The current scientific evidence points to Roundup consumption as a suspect in contributing to child development problems, estrogen sensitive cancers in women, and sex hormone imbalances in men and women. We need GMO labeling in order to consciously avoid eating the number one source of Roundup herbicide in our food supply. As free people we need the ability to send a market signal back to the RuR GMO producers when we avoid purchasing RuR GMO foods.

“Protecting our health is more important to us than protecting your ability to continue making financial profits.”

*I’ll be hosting a community discussion on the GMO labeling topic Tuesday evening, September 16, 2014 at the Tualatin Heritage Center. Please look for our advertisement and call our office to reserve a seat.*



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