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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2008 Volume VI: Nutrition, Metabolism, and Diabetes

Childhood Obesity and High Fructose Corn Syrup. What Is It Good For? Absolutely Nothing!

Guide for Curriculum Unit 08.06.10, published September 2008
by Huwerl Thornton, Jr.

This unit takes a look at the use of High Fructose Corn Syrup and its potential link to the obesity problem in the United States. It examines the complicated process of making High Fructose Corn Syrup and its make up as compared to conventional sugar. This unit also explores how the human body processes High Fructose Corn Syrup and how it is different than traditional sugar. This unit includes information on the history of High Fructose Corn Syrup, which gives an important example of how food production and agriculture have changed in the US over the past few decades. The unit also discusses how High Fructose Corn Syrup achieved mainstream use in the 1980's. As the use of High Fructose Corn Syrup began to rise, so did the level of obesity in the United States. This unit particularly looks at childhood obesity and some of its causes. Some obese children are exhibiting the health problems of a 40-year-old.

The unit also provides some strategies as to how the childhood obesity problem in the United States can be beat. This unit shows how eating habits can be changed to include more healthy foods. This unit will attempt to start with children, changing how kids look at soft drinks and attempting to choose alternative drinks such as 100 percent fruit juice or water. This change will hopefully spread to their families and beyond.

(Developed for Nutrition and Health, grade 3; recommended for Nutrition and Health, grades 3-6)

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