



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Q: Nutritional question: I talked to Sandy about this on Saturday morning when I called but the basic question I have is... The amount and type of sugar in fruit. I found a new web site on food data that "floored" me when I saw the sugar grams in fruit. The frightening data is listed below for Mango. 25 Grams of Sugar per mango - Yikes!

So what type of Sugar is this? Bad simple Sugar? Or healthy good fruit sugar with fiber etc. I can give up cokes, chocolate, potatoes, chips, and the regular unhealthy American Sugars but I'm not sure if I can give up the Fruits brother! What's the story?
Mike

A: Worry not, Mikey.....this LOOKS much worse than it is.....and is exactly the reason that simple sugars in fruit aren't as bad as one might think. In a word.....it's all about the **FIBER**.

What makes a high glycemic carbohydrate "bad".....and easily digested as a mono-saccharide (ie: simple sugar).....is the speed w/ which it enters and exits the stomach. It does this SO FAST, that the body doesn't know what to do w/ SO MUCH "fuel" all @ one time.....so, the body, in turn, secretes INSULIN to manage (via storage) the excess calories.....the body says: " *Can't use all of these now.....we'll store for later.....as FAT.*"

With such insulin manipulations (spikes), the body becomes very good @ storing the fast-entry & excess sugars.....and essentially FORGETS (really just becoming LESS efficient at) how to utilize the substrate (fat).....that it's PRIMARILY supposed to use to deliver calories when needed (like when training/racing).

This is why simple sugars are bad.....they add weight (albeit indirectly).....and worse, they predicate that your body SHIFTS the "substrate-exchange-ratio". This is the ration of carbs you need to keep the "fat-flame" burning.

Very efficient athletes **use very little** glycogen (stored sugars) to tap into high-volumes of Fat. THIS is good, because FAT offers 9 calories per gram (and are almost unlimited).....while carbs offer 4 cal-per-gram.....and are SO limited that they will last you only about 90-120 minutes.....hence, the word "bonk".

So what about Mango.....(and other fruits)?

Remember, these were bad **ONLY BECAUSE THE SPEED OF EXIT** from the stomach & **ENTRY** to the bloodstream.....(aside from the inherent dental issues associated with them).

And here's the good news.....even though they (fruits) are mono-saccharides.....their exit/entry speed is slowed by virtue of the fact that their form of sugar (fructose) is trapped within the FRUIT'S FIBER.....thus, SLOWING the exit/entry.

Now, while this is true of **whole fruits**.....like all good things, there's a catch.....if you turn this fiber-trapped fructose into a juice, you release it from it's parallel amount of fiber volume.....and it's now high-glycemic (w/ fast entry/exit capability) again. Such is the case w/ "high fructose corn-sweeteners"....bad stuff.

This is how apples differ from apple juice, oranges differ from orange juice.....and mangos differ from mango juice.

Whole fruits = good.....fruit juices, sweeteners, & concentrates = bad.

Sonni