

Is Maple Sugar Better for People with Diabetes?

by BRIAN CHABOT



Pure Maple for Diabetics?

Maple producers have asked me whether Pure Maple products are better for diabetics. Though I have seen nothing in writing, the rumor floats around the maple community that Pure Maple can be used with fewer restrictions compared to other sugars. As a consequence of increasing obesity, more people are developing diabetes, though being overweight is not the only cause. What used to be called adult-onset diabetes is now called Type 2 diabetes because it is appearing with alarming frequency in overweight children.

The Claim...

It is occasionally claimed that diabetics can use Pure Maple syrup and sugar without adverse effects. Most diabetics can consume some sugar in conservative amounts. Even those without diabetes should not be consuming large amounts of sugars. No research supports the claim that maple sugars behave differently in the body than other sugars. Moreover, experts on diabetes do not see reasons to think that Pure Maple behaves differently in the body than other sugars.

Pure Maple Not Safer

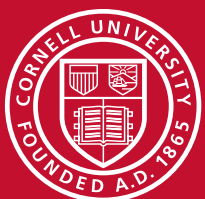
Maple producers or marketers should not be advising individuals with diabetes that maple products are in some way safer or can be used with less caution than other sugar sources. Though there apparently are some testimonials to this effect, it has not been researched or proven to be safer. Such misdirected advice could result in injury to the customer.

The Glycemic Index and Information

The glycemic index is a measure of how rapidly blood glucose concentration increases following consumption of a particular food. Diabetics use the glycemic index, along with regular monitoring of blood glucose, in determining how much of different foods to consume. Pure glucose is used as a standard (=100) because it appears rapidly in the blood when consumed. Sucrose, the main sugar in Pure Maple, has a glycemic index of about 68. Sucrose causes a slower increase in blood glucose concentration because, when consumed, sucrose is broken into two six-carbon sugars: glucose and fructose. The glucose then appears in the blood fairly quickly while fructose follows a different metabolic pathway to appear in the blood much later. By itself, fructose has a glycemic index of 19. The artificial maple syrup made by Fifty50 is based on fructose. Maple Grove's artificial maple syrup uses Splenda as a chemical sweetener. These are two different approaches to creating sweetened products for diabetics.

Conclusion

Another way for diabetics to look at this situation is to use Pure Maple where they need a sweetener and their glucose tolerance allows. The incomparable flavor of Pure Maple along with its minerals and antioxidants create added value and pleasure for the limited sugar intake.



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