Agave Nectar, Is It Healthy?

No. It’s not. Agave Nectar is no healthier than refined table sugar.

Agave nectar is mostly fructose. This is why agave has a low glycemic index. Many people believe that since the sugar in fruit is fructose that this means fructose is automatically healthy. It is, in small amounts, with fruit fiber, fruit vitamins, fruit minerals, and all of the other nutrition in fruit. When whole fruits are consumed, the fructose is absorbed more slowly.

With agave nectar there is nothing to slow the absorption. Even if you eat agave with foods rich in fiber, all of the fructose separates and is absorbed quickly. Fructose passes into the bloodstream and is taken to the liver, where it is made into glycogen. Glycogen is a product stored in the liver and released to make glucose when the body needs it. But once the liver is stocked with glycogen (again, it doesn’t take much), the remaining fructose makes insulin resistant fatty acids and triglycerides.

Excessive fructose consumption (and it doesn’t take much) can lead to liver disease, insulin resistance which leads to diabetes, raised LDL cholesterol, elevated triglycerides in the body, and weight gain due to multiple factors. And if that wasn’t enough, fructose does not trigger the release of two hormones (insulin and leptin) in your blood. These hormones tell your body it’s no longer hungry. And excessive fructose elevates uric acid level, which can lead to gout and/or metabolic syndrome including hypertension and glucose intolerance. The increase in fructose consumption in America directly correlates to the rise in diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. While this is mostly attributed to high fructose

corn syrup, if agave was the sweetener used in soda, our health as a nation would not be much better off.

If you're looking for alternative sweeteners to use, check out our Healthy Sugar Alternatives article. But keep this in mind: in nature, sweets are hard to come by, they are seasonal, and they come with fiber and other nutrition. There is no healthy way to consume sweets on a regular basis. If you are trying to eat healthy, instead of looking for the magical sugar that doesn't have any negative repercussions, learn to develop a healthier palate – a taste for raw fresh vegetables.