

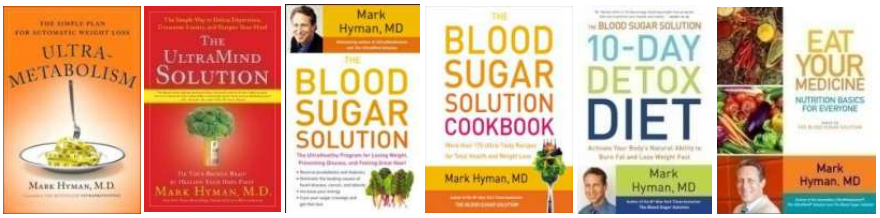
WN *Sugar*

World Nutrition **Volume 5, Number 6, June 2014**

Journal of the World Public Health Nutrition Association
Published monthly at www.wphna.org/worldnutrition/

Fed Up
The Clinton clincher

Access January 2014 Update on sugar here
Access February 2014 Editorial on sugar here
Access February 2014 Update on sugar here
Access March 2014 Update on sugar here



These books are by Mark Hyman. They are all best-sellers in the US. Mark Hyman has shifted from a kind of naturopathy to a flat-out onslaught on sugar. He is the Clinton family's diet guru

Introduction

Since 1900, four US presidents have shaped US and therefore global food and nutrition policy and practice. Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), influenced by Upton Sinclair and Harvey Wiley, passed the *Pure Food and Drug Act* which led to the US FDA (Food and Drug Administration). Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961) who suffered repeated heart attacks in office, promoted the mission of his physician Paul Dudley White for prevention. This led to the demonisation of saturated fat and dietary cholesterol masterminded by Ancel Keys. Richard Nixon (1969-1974) boosted the nutrition and cancer hypothesis as part of his vision to conquer cancer as 'his' equivalent of the moon landing. He also instituted the *White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health* convened by Jean Mayer, which later led to the 1977 Senate Committee 'McGovern' concerted dietary guidelines advocating less fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt. These initiatives all shaped US and UN policies, and national programmes throughout the world. Out of office, Bill Clinton (2000-2008), after a quadruple heart by-pass operation, first went vegan, and dropped 30 pounds of body weight. He now is championing his nutrition guru Mark Hyman, who has become a close family friend of Bill, Hilary and Chelsea Clinton. Mark Hyman, an advisor to the *Fed Up* movie, demonises sugar.

Sugar. The point has tipped



Editor's note

All this year *WN* has recorded the onslaught on sugar or, to be precise, sugar added to ultra-processed products. This month we state that 'the point has tipped'. Pressure for a paradigm shift includes constant attacks on sugar as fattening and addictive on the blogosphere; repeated revelations of Big Sugar hanky-panky confirmed by the WHO director-general; denunciations of sugared snacks and soft drinks by high-profile writers; rocketing uncontrolled rates of obesity and diabetes; and outrageous promotion of sugared products to children on television, the internet, and in schools. The point has now tipped because of sudden new impacts. One is the *Fed Up* movie, whose *Rolling Stone* review is published below. Two is a grand alliance of influential people against sugar. Three, also as outlined here, is the entry of Bill Clinton and his nutrition guru Mark Hyman.

Peter Travers writes: Forget zombies and vampires, the scariest thing on-screen anywhere right now is *Fed Up*. Even Godzilla can't rival Big Sugar as a weapon of mass destruction. In this no-frills, no-bull documentary, executive producer Laurie David, a prime force behind the Al Gore documantary *An Inconvenient Truth*, teams up with director Stephanie Soechtig and narrator Katie Couric to tell it like it is about obesity in America. It's not a pretty picture. Since 1980, we've doubled our sugar intake, seen an epidemic of Type II diabetes and watched overweight kids become the norm – all thanks to processed foods. *Fed Up* is not a sermon, it's a wakeup call.

Here's just one dirty little secret: as fat is removed from food products the manufacturers replace it with sugar to improve the taste and keep us all addicted. Junk food = junkie America. Why does this happen? Let's start with collusion. With fat profits come political influence, which means processed foods and expanding waistlines will be here to stay unless we all get mad as hell and refuse to take it anymore. *Fed Up*, with its often crude mode of attack, is definitely mad as hell. And its muckraking spirit, an anomaly in the age of giving in, is inspiring. The filmmakers wisely and powerfully focus on the children who fall victim to the system's emaciated values. *Fed Up* has a fire in its belly to change things. Naïve? Maybe. So what. I say, Godspeed. Here is something rare at the multiplex: a movie that matters.

The Clinton factor



In office 1992-2000, Bill Clinton pigged out on fast food (left). In 2004 he had heart surgery and got the message about diet, dropped 30 pounds, eats freshly prepared meals (right) and hates sugar

Fed Up features an all-star line-up of influential US people who have made up their minds against sugar, including Robert Lustig, David Ludwig, Gary Taubes, former FDA commissioner David Kessler, Mark Bittman and Michael Pollan. The narrator, Katie Couric, made her name as a television reporter with an interview that destroyed Sarah Palin's chances of being elected to high office.

Most significant are the appearances of Bill Clinton (above) and nutrition guru to the Clinton family Mark Hyman (see the books above, and Box 1 below). Mark Hyman is virulently hostile to sugar, saying 'Sugar is eight times more addictive than cocaine. Sugar is the new nicotine. Sugar is the new fat, except fat is not addictive in the way that sugar is. And worse, sugar actually causes diabetes and obesity'. He is endorsed by Bill Clinton, who says publicly: 'T've made drastic changes to my own diet since 2004 and I hope Dr Hyman's new book will inspire you as he has inspired me.'

Box 1

Hyman-Clinton semiotics



Bill Clinton (left in both pictures) believes that Mark Hyman (right in both pictures) maintains his health and maybe is saving his life. These days, diet doctor Mark Hyman attacks sugar

Anybody not knowing who either of these two men are, asked who was dominant, would say the man in front on the right, with the full-on smile and the bigger face, who at left is self-styled as if just emerged from an operating theatre. The older apparently smaller man beside him, looking a little tired and hesitant, seems like a team member. Bill Clinton, president of the USA from 1992 to 2000, the man on the left, believes that he owes his current health and now perhaps his life to the man on the right, Mark Hyman. This would explain why these pictures were released. Mark Hyman is now friend and advisor to the Clinton family. He could be the diet doctor to the next US President. Some say he could be appointed as the US public health supremo, charged to slim a nation.



As Mark Hyman indicates, nobody has ever suggested that dietary fat has the qualities of a drug. But the *Fed Up* movie goes flat out, pedal to the metal, asserting that sugar in the form added to many snack foods, and to soft drinks, is addictive – see the advertisement above. This charge, now well documented in the US with human as well as animal research, will mean massive legal problems for Big Sugar. 'One-quarter of the world's diabetes is explained by sugar alone' says Robert Lustig. 'Sugar in excess is a toxin'. Bill Clinton has maintained his 30-pound weight loss for the past four years on Mark Hyman's sugar-free diet, and says he feels great.

Box 2

Sugar needs ealth warnings

And in the UK... Simon Capewell is an advisor to the UK-based Action on Sugar. This is an extract of his view on product labelling, published in the British Medical Journal.

Cigarettes lurched from being socially acceptable to unacceptable after warning labels were implemented. These tobacco control successes highlight the importance of targeting the three As, of affordability, availability, and acceptability. Warning labels target acceptability. Public support for warnings about added sugar seems high, suggesting that such labelling is politically feasible. In Britain, a recent *Populus* public opinion poll found that about 60 per cent of adults would support health warnings similar to those on cigarette packets on food packaging. Even more would support banning sugary drinks in UK schools, or limiting the amount of sugar allowed in certain foods. Furthermore, almost half (45 per cent) would support a tax on sugary drinks. Sugar is being progressively demonised. The industry might be expected to oppose warning labels on sugary drinks with a barrage of opposing arguments. This is reminiscent of previous opposition to standardised tobacco packaging.

Status

Please cite as: *The Sugar team*. FedUp. The Clinton clincher. [Sugar] *World Nutrition*, June 2014, **5**, 6, 533-536. Obtainable at www.wphna.org.

All contributions to *World Nutrition* are the responsibility of their authors. They should not be taken to be the view or policy of the World Public Health Nutrition Association (the Association) or of any of its affiliated or associated bodies, unless this is explicitly stated.