

PREVIEW_ Dr. Aseem Malhotra - Action on Sugar (SA 2015) 2

Dr. Malhotra: I was fascinated and up to this point I hadn't had much interest in the sugar issue, I wasn't even aware of it. So I started looking into doing my own research and looking at papers.

The first thing I learned was sugar has absolutely no nutritional value whatsoever and contrary to what the food industry wants you to believe, you do not need any carbohydrate for energy from added sugar at all.

There is no biological requirement for it, so that's the first thing, the first message that needs to come across. And then we have the old issue on fructose and you know, look at Lustig's work, other people published on it as well.

And the common wisdom is that a calorie is a calorie and sugar is just empty calories, but we know there's good evidence that chronic fructose exposure promotes liver fat accumulation, which promotes metabolic syndrome.

Now, what's a metabolic syndrome? Well, it's specifically the most common definition of high blood pressure, abnormal glucose, such as insulin resistance, or impaired glucose tolerance or B type 2 diabetes, increased triglycerides, decreased HDL and increased waist circumference.

You have three of those, then you've got metabolic syndrome. And for me, as a cardiologist, that's important, because actually 66% of people admitted, with a heart attack, actually have the metabolic syndrome. And if you have the metabolic syndrome, you'll have a heart attack, you are 50% more likely to be readmitted within a year or die.