

Reading Selection

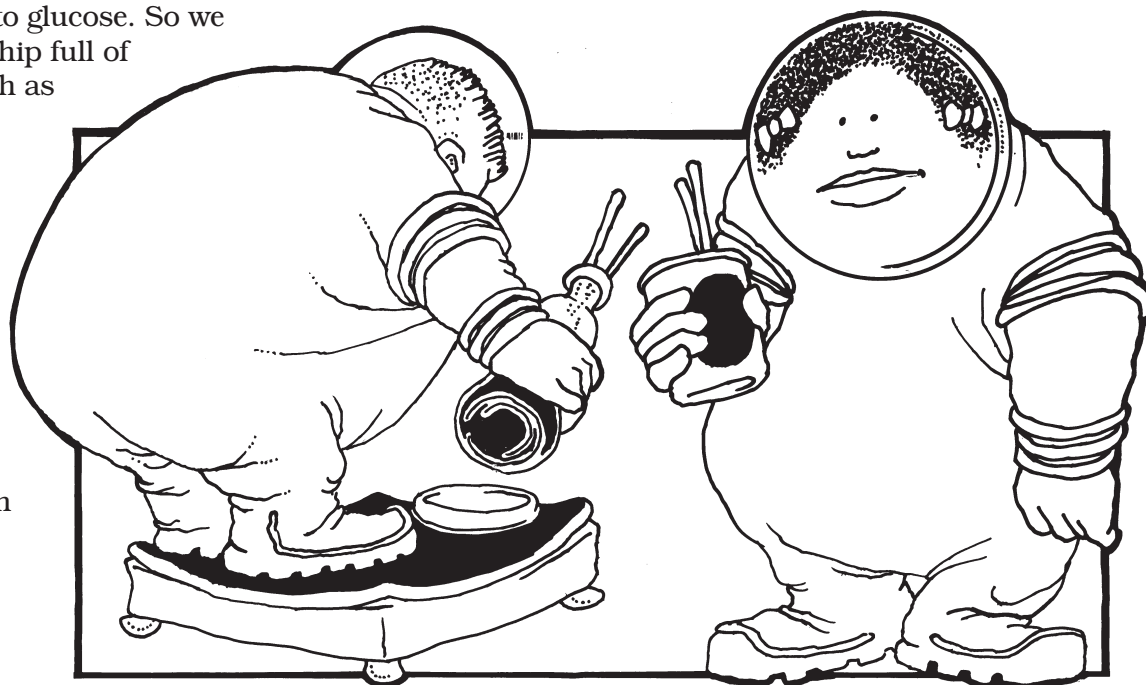
Low on Energy? Here's What to Eat

In Lesson 5, we pretended to be astronauts stranded on a planet with no starchy foods. We realized that we could not remain active for very long without starches, because we get most of our energy when our bodies break starches down into glucose. So we ordered a cargo ship full of starchy foods such as potatoes, rice, breads, pasta, corn, peas, and beans.

But now the ship is late. What are we going to do? How will we get glucose for energy if not from eating starches? Although our bodies will continue to make glucose on their own, they will eventually need more, from food.

Would corn syrup be a good source? After all, it's one of the few foods in which glucose is the only sugar. But if we were to eat glucose

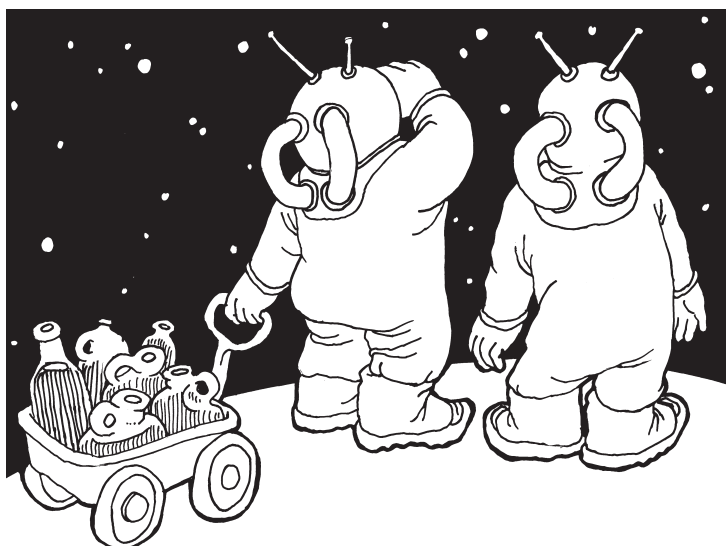
alone, we wouldn't get many of the other things that our bodies need to stay healthy. So eating only corn syrup or other foods that are high in glucose is not the answer.

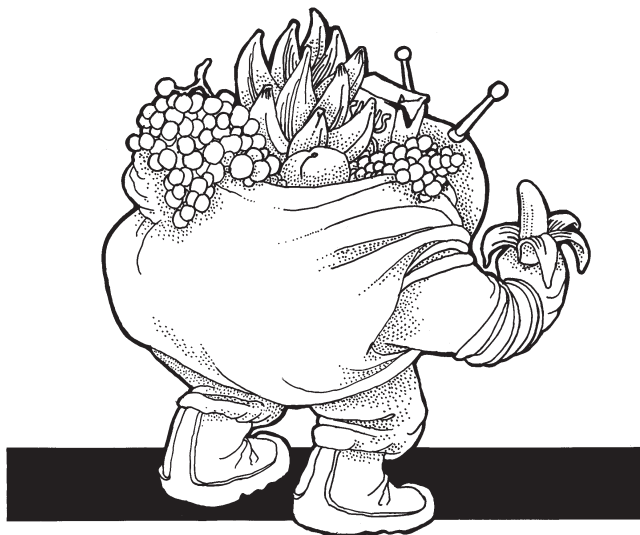


We could always get temporary energy by drinking soft drinks, since many of them are sweetened with corn syrup and fructose.

(Fructose is another kind of sugar found mainly in fruits.) However, we would have to drink a lot of this sweet stuff, which probably would make us sick. Also, these sugary drinks don't provide us with any of the other nutrients our bodies need to grow and repair themselves.

That's not all. We would probably develop serious health problems if we continued to eat too much sugar. For one thing, eating too much glucose and other sugars is a major cause of tooth decay. Also, too much glucose causes our





bodies to develop more fat than we need to stay healthy. In fact, being overweight can cause even more problems with our health.

Nature's Sweeteners

If we intend to stay healthy and active on our new planet, glucose alone is not the answer. Luckily, nature provides us with a healthy helping of glucose in certain fruits, such as grapes, raisins, and bananas. These foods also provide us with other useful nutrients our bodies need.

When our ship full of starches does come, we will once again have

a steady source of energy. We will probably start eating starchy foods as soon as possible, and we'll have enough choices to please everyone—potatoes, rice, beans, and pasta, to name just a few. And, when we want to take an all-day hike to explore our new planet, we will be able to do what athletes often do before a big race—"carbo-load."

To carbo-load means to load up on starches—one kind of carbohydrate—and build up stored energy in our bodies. We can then use this energy when we have a lot of work to do over a long period of time. So if we want to build a house or climb a mountain on our planet, carbo-loading will come in pretty handy!

Carbo-loading is not something we would want to do every day, because we need to eat a well-balanced diet to remain healthy. But carbo-loading is something that athletes can try if their doctors say it's okay.

