



## Camp Ah-Ha Make It Monday – Rock Candy Science

Here is a fun science experiment  
that you can eat

Who: You and your family

What:

- Everyone loves candy and candy has been made at home for centuries.
- Rock Candy is one of the simplest and oldest versions of this sweet treat.
- There are references to “sugre candy” that date back centuries. Persian poet Jalal-ad-Din Rumi who lived in Turkey in the middle 1200's mentioned it in his work. Shakespeare even worked a reference into his 1596 play Henry IV “and one poor penny worth of sugar candy to make thee long winded”.
- The Shakespeare quote refers to rock candy’s ability to help soothe sore throats. Do you ever think of candy being related to medicine? Doctors used to put medicine on rock candy to hide the bitter taste of the medicine. If you like the movie Mary Poppins you might know the song “A Spoonful of Sugar Helps the Medicine Go Down”!
- Rock Candy is really just sugar that has been dissolved in water and allowed to reform in large crystals. When you mix the sugar into the boiling water, you create a super **saturated solution** meaning there is more sugar than can be dissolved into the water. Over time the liquid cools and evaporates. The sugar **recrystallizes** forming the rock candy.
- Did you know you can make rock candy at home? It’s also a cool science project that shows you how crystals form!

How:

**To make rock candy at home you need:**

2 Cups water

4 Cups of Sugar  
A medium sauce pan  
Wooden spoon  
A heat safe glass jar (like a mason jar)  
String or wooden skewer (If using a string, you will also need a weight like a metal washer to tie to the end)  
A Pencil or Clip Clothes pins that fit across the top of the jar.

***NOTE: Please have an adult help you since you will need to cook the mixture over heat. The liquid will be hot.***

1. Pour water into saucepan and bring it to a rolling boil over medium heat
2. Add sugar and start stirring.
3. Continue stirring until the sugar has entirely dissolved. Be patient. This may take several minutes. Be sure to wait until most of the sugar has dissolved. You should see very few crystals of sugar in the water.
4. Take off heat while you prepare the jar and string or skewer.
5. If using string
  - a. Cut String so that it is long enough to reach the bottom of the jar and still have enough to tie the end to a pencil
  - b. Tie one end of the string to a Pencil and tie the washer to the other end.
  - c. Continue to step 7 below
6. If using a skewer:
  - a. Make sure the skewer is long enough to reach the bottom of the jar.
  - b. Use clip style close pins and attach one on each side of the skewer so that they will rest on top of the jar and hold the skewer up right in the middle of the jar.
  - c. Continue to step 7 below
7. Pour the liquid carefully into the jar.
8. Dip the string or skewer into the liquid several times and take out. Allow to dry overnight on a piece of wax paper. This step is very important. This will allow the seed crystals to form. The seed crystals will be needed for the other crystals to attach to.
9. The next day, put the skewer or string into the solution in the jar and let it set for several days at room temperature. It takes patience but as the water evaporates you'll see more and more crystals form. In about 7 days you should have a nice collection of sweet crystals to eat.
  - If you want, you can add candy flavorings or food coloring to the liquid right after you take it off the heat and before you pour it into the jar.