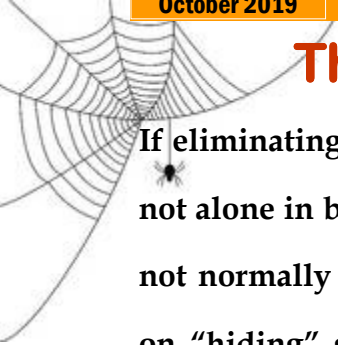


Wellness Corner Connection

Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIF

October 2019

The Truth About Sugar: *Frightening*



If eliminating or even reducing sugar from your diet is an ongoing struggle, you are not alone in battling this war! Even with the best of intentions, sugar lurks in foods not normally viewed as sweet. The food manufacturers and marketers are experts on “hiding” sugar by tricking you into thinking something is healthy. Did you know that they are allowed to claim whatever they want on the cover of a package? But the information contained on the label is regulated by the government.

In this issue of Wellness Corner Connection, we’ll uncover some of the scary truth of how sugar affects not only your waistline and heart but your brain as well! The good news is you can learn to break the addictive pull from the “sugar reaper” and actually start to enjoy the *real* taste of food. But beware, sugar can be disguised on the ingredient label as glucose, fructose, sucrose, maltose, dextrose, starch, brown rice or corn syrup, fruit juice, honey, and one and on and on!

Trick or Treat? No matter how you “carve” it, sugar can be disguised by many names, but the affects are just as frightening. Topics covered in this issue:

- Sugar: The Brain Snatcher
- Breaking the chains of sugar cravings
- Beware of sugar substitutes
- The many disguises of sugar
- Can Sugar Trick Cancer Cells
- Don’t Be Tricked: Read the Label
- A Hearty Meal and Healthy Treat



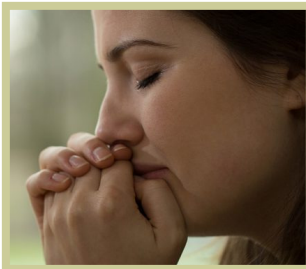
Sugar: The Brain Snatcher



Our brains do require some sugar in order to function properly, but what is required is glucose which comes naturally from fruits, milk and grains. It's the added sugars that we see which are causing the concern. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that the average American consumes anywhere from 150 to 170 pounds of simple sugars a year! That calculates to 30-60 teaspoons of sugar every 24 hours and really that is easier to do than you think. For instance, if you had 3 sodas in a day, you could have consumed nearly 33 teaspoons of sugar!

Some of the long-term negative effects from excess amounts of sugar:

Causes Cravings: when you consume sugar, the reward pathways in your brain are stimulated causing a surge of serotonin and dopamine (the feel-good hormones) to be released. The more sugar you eat, the more your brain associates reward with sugar which makes you crave more. Over-activating these reward pathways generally leads to loss of control, temptation and **increased tolerance to sugar**, meaning you need to consume more sugar to get the same level of satisfaction.



Can contribute to Anxiety and Depression: You may have experienced the peaks and drops of your blood sugar if you've ever grabbed for something sweet around 3pm to give your energy a boost. Chances are a short time afterwards you start to feel wiped out or even shaky, causing you to reach for more sweets to regain that sugar "high", starting you on a vicious cycle.

These dramatic changes in blood sugar can lead to mood swings, irritability, brain fog, fatigue, anxiety and depression. Interestingly, these peaks and valleys cause constant surges of serotonin, which studies show can deplete the brain's limited supply and can contribute to depression.

Effects on your teeth: Although sugar can be somewhat corrosive to your teeth, it doesn't actually cause cavities or tooth decay, unlike what we may have been told as youngsters. Bacteria is the culprit. However, the bacteria that causes cavities feeds off of sugar! There lies the connection. It is highly recommended to brush your teeth after eating something sweet.



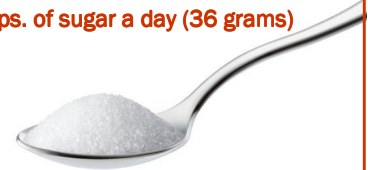
Can contribute to chronic diseases: Sugar may not directly cause disease but it definitely contributes to weight gain which increases one's risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, slowing the immune system, age-related coronary heart disease, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, coronary heart disease, and some types of cancer.

Women—recommended no more than 6 tsps. of sugar a day (24 grams)



Sugar is not a dietary requirement and has no nutritional value.

Men—recommended no more than 9 tsps. of sugar a day (36 grams)



Breaking The Chains of Sugar Cravings

WebMD polled several experts in the field of nutrition and published ways to fight off the sugar craving. Try out a few to see what works best for you. The key is to not get frustrated with slips. Changing habits can take upwards of two months. First you need to answer this question: Are you ready to change? If you are, even a little bit, try to make one small change. Remember it's not about being perfect, it's about progress!



Combine foods. Stopping at one cookie may seem impossible. Try combining the sweet you crave with a healthy food. For example, dip a banana or strawberries in melted chocolate. Or mix almonds with dark chocolate chips (or raisins). The combination of fiber and/or protein will help slow down the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream and will keep you satisfied longer (avoiding the sugar crashes).

Chew some gum. Research has shown that chewing gum can reduce food cravings.

Add protein. Eating protein is an easy way to curb sugar cravings. High-protein foods digest more slowly, keeping you feeling full for longer. Protein doesn't make your blood sugar spike the way refined carbs and sugars do. Pick proteins like lean chicken, low-fat yogurt, eggs, nuts, or beans.



Reach for fruit. Keeping fruit handy can help not only curb the craving but give you the energy boost you seek. Eating a whole fruit verses drinking fruit juice provides you with the *fiber* that slows the absorption of sugar in the blood. Also helps keep you satisfied.

Go cold turkey. Sometimes cutting sweets out all at once can work. The initial 48 to 72 hours can be very difficult but you will find that after this time, the cravings will diminish and your taste buds will change. You'll find you are satisfied with less sugar.

Retrain your taste buds. Going cold turkey may be too harsh. Take small steps. Try passing on dessert after dinner. Start putting less sugar in your coffee or cereal. Cut back on one sweet food or drink each week. Soon you won't even miss it!

Move. When those afternoon slumps start and you feel the urge to grab a candy, get up and walk around. Try drinking a glass of water (flavored with fresh herbs or fruit may help).

Eat regularly. Waiting too long between meals can set you up to choose high fat, sugary foods just to curb your hunger. Eating every 3-5 hours can help keep blood sugar stable and help avoid irrational eating patterns. Tip to avoid overeating: split your meals in half. Maybe have a piece of toast and peanut butter in the morning and a low sugar high protein yogurt mid-morning as a snack. Break up your lunch to have half mid-day when you normally reach for that sweet to boost your energy. Remember, proteins and fibers help reduce sugar peaks and drops.

Beware of “Sugar Substitutes”

Sugar gets a lot of attention due to its contribution to leading co-morbidities in America. Yet it's important to also look at the “sugar substitutes” which also contributes to obesity, metabolic syndrome (increase of 36%) and diabetes (increase of 67%). What? How is that possible? Aren't these sugar substitutes meant to help combat the very thing they are causing?

The FDA has approved five artificial sweeteners: saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame, and sucralose; even stevia, a “natural” low-calorie sweetener.

Research has also shown these artificial sweeteners can interfere with your bodies ability to “count” calories and the way we taste food. They are much more potent than table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup. A miniscule amount produces a sweet taste comparable to that of sugar, without comparable calories. Taste buds start to be “desensitized” to sweetness, therefore, making fruit less appealing and un-sweet foods such as vegetables, down right unbearable.

But how much is “safe”? That depends on your definition of safe. Most studies have been done using far smaller amounts of diet soda than the 24 ounces a day consumed by many people (including children and teens). Recommendation: Don't try to eliminate sugar or sugar substitutes all at once. Start backing off by cutting the quantity used a quarter at a time. And try to keep temptations out of the house!

Harvard Health Publishing “Artificial sweeteners: sugar-free, but at what cost?”



“Most people consuming artificial sweeteners do so assuming these products will help them avoid weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. Yet we are seeing the opposite association from multiple studies,”

Meghan Azad, PhD
(University of Manitoba)



The effects of artificial sweeteners in the general population and their increased use in foods, makes this a very important topic.

Over 40% of adult Americans consume non-nutritive sweeteners on a daily basis.

The Many Names of Sugar



Can Sugar Trick Cancer Cells?

All of our cells need glucose (blood sugar) for energy. Healthy cells follow a cycle of life that includes growth, division and death. As old cells die off, they are replaced by healthy cells. But cancer cells are actually old cells that refuse to die and instead keep growing, dividing, and building up in one place, creating a tumor.



Since October is Breast Cancer awareness month, I thought it fitting to talk about the link between sugar and cancer. Cancer is caused by genetic mutations, either inherited or acquired over time through exposure to carcinogens and other complications. Although not proven to cause cancer, studies have shown that cancer cells use a combination of sugar and specific proteins to thrive.

The real culprit in consuming more sugary foods and drinks is the increase in obesity. Obesity **has been linked to cancer** because it alters hormone levels in the body which are associated with a greater risk of both developing cancer and having cancer recur or progress. Fat cells release inflammatory proteins called adipokines which can damage DNA and eventually cause tumors.

Some cancer experts believe that sugar does play a role in driving cancer. Some cancers may start due to high levels of insulin in the body. Insulin is produced in the pancreas and when you consume sugary foods or drinks, insulin is pumped out in an attempt to “guide” the glucose into your cells (sugar consumed is converted to glucose in order to enter your blood stream). The more sugar you consume, the more insulin is produced, then potentially nourishing and awaking dormant cancer cells.





Bottom line: Stick with natural sugar such as fruits and dairy products. Beware of ADDED SUGARS found in simple carbohydrates (soda, candy, baked goods*) but also in sauces, salad dressings and other condiments. Key is to establish a balanced nutritious diet filled with whole (real) foods and keep to a regular exercise schedule. And read the product label!

***Note even some starches such as white rice, crackers, and pretzels gets converted to simple sugar.**

WebMD

Don't Be Tricked: Read The Label

Remember, don't be tricked by what food manufacturers claim on the front of packages. Just because Cocoa Puffs say “whole-grain” DOES NOT mean it's healthy! Knowing what to eat can be a mystery and down right scary! Your only “weapon” is to inspect the ingredients label. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

-  Ingredients are listed in order of highest to lowest amount in that product. If sugar is anywhere within the first 3 ingredients, it's a lot!
-  Look for the word “Whole” not refined or bleached
-  Watch out for serving sizes. Labels show how much is in a standard amount of that product, usually a single serving. However, it's easy to consume the entire package of some foods which could be two or three servings! Beware!
-  Just because it says “no-added sugar” doesn't mean it's still not high in natural sugar like in fruit. Still a concern especially if you are diabetic. Sometimes this label means artificial sweeteners were used instead. Still not healthy!

Understand a Food Label

...and make better choices for your health

1 Count Calories

• Look at the serving size, the number of servings, and the number of calories per serving.

2 Check these for heart health

• Choose foods that are lower in saturated fat and sodium.
• Keep trans fat to 0.

3 Is it nutritionally valuable?

• Select foods that are nutrient dense and a good source of fiber.

Tip...

Consider how added sugars fit your daily budget.

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving
Calories 230

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 8g **10%**

Saturated Fat 1g **5%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 160mg **7%**

Total Carbohydrate 37g **13%**

Dietary Fiber 4g **14%**

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

Protein 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg **10%**

Calcium 260mg **20%**

Iron 8mg **45%**

Potassium 235mg **6%**

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Hearty Meatless Slow-Cooker Chili



With the cooler weather fast approaching, this hearty chili is the perfect meal and is so easy to do. I have made this several times always impressed by the wonderful taste of all the combined vegetables and spices. Even my meat-lover relatives and friends find it delicious!

Guaranteed you won't hear "where's the beef (or turkey or chicken) when you serve this! It makes a lot, so you'll have plenty of leftovers to enjoy throughout the week. Freeze some and pack some for your lunch! Enjoy!



"Makes 10-15 servings. This recipe can be adjusted according to your taste preferences, so you can leave out undesirable ingredients or add others that appeal to you (like mushrooms). I add ingredients just to bulk up the heartiness and color palate of the chili, but feel free to just use a few green peppers or same-colored zucchinis as you desire. By the end, you just want everything to be hearty, moist, and flavored -- mess around with it as you go! I would say to serve it with shredded cheese and corn chips, but then it's no longer 'vegan.' :)"

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1 tablespoon dried oregano |
| 1 green bell pepper, chopped | 1 tablespoon dried parsley |
| 1 red bell pepper, chopped | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped | 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 2 onions, chopped | 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes with juice |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced | 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained |
| 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained | 1 (15 ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained |
| 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed | 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans, rinsed and drained |
| 1 zucchini, chopped | 2 (6 ounce) cans tomato paste |
| 1 yellow squash, chopped | 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce, or more if needed |
| 6 tablespoons chili powder | 1 cup vegetable broth, or more if needed |
| 1 tablespoon ground cumin | |

Directions

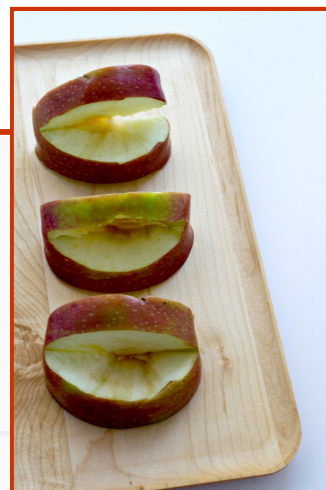
- 1 Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, and cook the green, red, and yellow bell peppers, onions, and garlic until the onions start to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Place the mixture into a slow cooker. Stir in spinach, corn, zucchini, yellow squash, chili powder, cumin, oregano, parsley, salt, black pepper, tomatoes, black beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, and tomato paste until thoroughly mixed. Pour the tomato sauce and vegetable broth over the ingredients.
- 2 Set the cooker on Low, and cook until all vegetables are tender, 4 to 5 hours. Check seasoning; if chili is too thick, add more tomato sauce and vegetable broth to desired thickness. Cook an additional 1 to 2 hours to blend the flavors.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED © 2019 Allrecipes.com

Apple Nut Butter Teeth Bites



I thought this was too funny (and healthy) to not include. What a clever and easy treat to serve during Halloween. Get the kids involved for added enjoyment!



INGREDIENTS

- 3 apples, cut vertically in half
- 6 Tbsp. sunflower seed butter (or favorite nut butter of choice)
- 2 strawberries, sliced
- sunflower seeds for the teeth

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Take each apple half and gently carve out the mouth with a small knife.
- 2 Stuff the inside with 1 Tbsp. sunflower butter.
- 3 Carefully place the sunflower seeds into the "gums" of the apple and then decorate with a strawberry "tongue" slice.

NUTRITION

Serving Size: 1 Vampire Bite

Calories: 140 calories

Fat: 7 g