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Too Much Sugar  
By Mary Grider, Nutrition Educator

Sugar may be sweet, but too much causes problems in our bodies. Scientists have done extensive research and have found that sugar not only can cause weight gain but a host of other problems as well.

In America the sugar we drink in sodas, sports drinks, etc. is our #1 source of added dietary sugar. One can of soda can have more sugar than should be consumed in a whole day. Below are a few other problems with too much sugar:

- Empty calories- sugar provides no nutrients, so your body gets no benefits.
- Diabetes- sugar doesn’t cause diabetes, but it can contribute to a high calorie diet which is a risk factor.
- Cavities- the added sugar causes bacteria growth which can cause cavities.
- Increased risk of heart disease- a high sugar diet can lead to obesity, inflammation, high triglycerides, and high blood pressure.

Consider the following tips to help you decrease your sugar intake:

- Swap sweet drinks for water or unsweetened seltzer.
- Eat a piece of fruit instead of a whole smoothie which often contains several servings of fruit.
- Look for cereals with less than 5 grams of sugar per serving.
- Instead of jelly, put a sliced banana on your peanut butter sandwich.
- Keep a food diary which can help you determine where added sugar may be hiding.
Monthly Chair Exercise

Back Massage

Seated in a chair with good posture, place a ball behind you and lean against it with your upper back to hold the ball up between you and the chair.

Rotate your torso side to side and bend up and down to give yourself a relaxing massage.

Recipe of the Month

Lemon-Herb Shortbread Cookies

**Ingredients**
- ½ cup turbinado sugar or regular sugar, divided
- 1 ½ cups almond meal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice (2 lemons)
- 2 teaspoons poppy seeds
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt

**Preparation**

**Step 1**
Process ¼ cup of the sugar in a food processor until sugar begins to look like fine sand, about 1 minute. Add almond meal, flour, butter, lemon zest, lemon juice, poppy seeds, thyme, and salt to processor. Process until dough just comes together, about 30 seconds. Separate dough into 2 equal portions; roll each portion into a 9 x 1 ½- inch log and wrap each log tightly in plastic wrap. Freeze at least 2 hours or overnight.

**Step 2**
Preheat oven to 300 F. Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Place remaining ¼ cup sugar on a plate; roll dough log in sugar to coat evenly. Slice 1 log into 32 (1/4-inch-thick) slices. Place cookies 1 inch apart on lined baking sheets. Bake in preheated oven until golden, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool 5 minutes on baking sheets. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely at room temperature, about 30 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough.

On the Move

Stay Active in Winter

The colder temperatures and darkness that comes with winter can be a barrier to your regular fitness routine. Overcoming this barrier can be as easy as finding some other activities to enjoy during these few months.

Because of colder temperatures or inclement weather, you may want to choose activities that can be done indoors.

- Walking can be done at a local mall, community center or an indoor track.
- Consider going to a gym to use the equipment or to take a class. Many insurance companies will pay for a membership or for Silver Sneakers classes.
- Try a dance class. Dancing can be one of the best forms of exercise since you use your body as well as your brain to coordinate your steps.
- Swimming is a great low impact exercise that is particularly helpful for those with arthritis.

As with any exercise, don’t forget to do some gentle warm-up exercises and stretches post workout to prevent muscle soreness.
Living Better
The Power of Positivity

Do you tend to be a glass half empty or a glass half full kind of person? Some people seem naturally predisposed to a happy temperament, but there are tools to use to help you learn to be more positive.

You may notice that your mind is always thinking. And if those thoughts are overly negative, they can influence the rest of your life. Helen Keller said, “Happiness cannot come from without, it comes from within.” We can’t always wait for our circumstances to change to make us happy, so we need to develop ways to encourage positivity within ourselves.

Start by keeping track of what you are usually thinking about. Also keep track of the words those around you speak. If you hear a lot of negative talk you may find it creeping into your own mind. When you notice your thoughts becoming negative try replacing them with more positive thoughts. Rather than saying, “I’ll never be able to do that”, think about saying “with some effort or some assistance I’m sure I can do that.”

Another habit to start is gratitude. Sometime during your day stop and find at least three things you are thankful for. Life is not always as bad as our mind makes it out to be. You can also start trying to find the positive in each situation as well as focusing your mind on positive things. Paying attention to the parts of your life that you enjoy and appreciate will soon help you have a rosier outlook on life.

Medication Manager
Preventing Colds & Flus

Cold weather forces us all inside where other’s germs may make us sick. Common methods to stop the spread of germs include avoiding contact with those who are ill, washing your hands frequently, especially after being in public, wiping off or disinfecting items used by others and staying away from the public if you are sick.

Other tips that can help you stay healthy are:

- Eat your brightly colored vegetables! They are full of Vitamin C and antioxidants and help to keep you healthy.
- Get plenty of Vitamin D. Sunlight helps the body to produce Vitamin D. Most people don’t get enough sun in the winter, so ask your doctor if you should be taking Vitamin D supplements. You may also want to up your intake of mushrooms, salmon, or egg yolks.
- Stay active. Remaining active and exercising can help reduce stress and accelerates the circulation of white blood cells that fight disease.
- Get enough sleep. 8 hours seems to be the optimum number.
- Address excess stress. There is a strong connection between mental health and physical illness.
- Drink green tea which is soothing and full of antioxidants.
- Get a flu vaccine. It can prevent or decrease the duration of the flu.
- Avoid sharing items if you or someone else is sick.
To Your Health

Mindfulness

If you’ve heard or read about mindfulness meditation—also known as mindfulness—you might be curious about how to practice it.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you’re sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

Spending too much time planning, problem-solving, daydreaming, or thinking negative or random thoughts can be draining. It can also make you more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. Practicing mindfulness exercises can help you direct your attention away from this kind of thinking and engage with the world around you.

What are the benefits of meditation?

Meditation has been studied in many clinical trials. The overall evidence supports the effectiveness of meditation for various conditions, including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Pain
- Depression
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure

Preliminary research indicates that meditation can also help people with asthma and fibromyalgia. Meditation can help you experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance. Meditation also has been shown to improve attention, decrease job burnout, improve sleep, and improve diabetes control.

Upcoming Events

A Matter of Balance Workshops

More workshops coming Spring 2020!

Living Well Workshops

More workshops coming Spring 2020!

If you’d like to host a workshop, please contact Lesley Clack.
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Questions or Comments? Contact us!

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