



Share the Wellness Tip

November 22, 2013

November is National Diabetes Month



November is National Diabetes Month. Unless we make changes in how we live and eat, forty years from now it is predicted that one out of five adults in the United States will have diabetes. Diabetes is a serious disease that affects almost every part of your body and can shorten your life.

Not so long ago, eating too much fat was commonly believed to be the main cause of obesity. But now, more and more experts are arguing that sugar is the single most important cause of the worldwide epidemics of obesity and diabetes. But it isn't just eating that we have to worry about.

We may be drinking our sugar as well. It's important to choose your beverages just as thoughtfully as you choose your foods.

Facts on Fructose

Fructose is one of many naturally occurring sugars. It's found in fruits and vegetables and in table sugar, or sucrose. It's added to corn syrup, too, to make high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). All three – fructose, sucrose and HFCS – may be used to sweeten beverages, like sodas, fruit drinks and smoothies, or the flavored syrups used in drinks like specialty coffees.

Researchers have linked a high-fructose diet to increased blood glucose, increased triglycerides and abdominal obesity. These risk factors increase the risk for heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Thirst-Quenching Alternatives

Here are some simple ways to quench your thirst while limiting your fructose intake:

- Keep cold water or seltzer on hand. Flavor it with a slice of lemon, lime, orange, cucumber or watermelon, or a splash of 100 percent fruit juice.
- Drink unsweetened iced tea. Make your own with flavorful herbal teas, like refreshing peppermint.
- Have a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Skip flavored syrups, like vanilla, in your coffee drink. Add a little artificial sweetener instead.
- Take a pass on post-sports drinks; water will work instead.
- Ask for no added sugar when you order a smoothie.
- When splurging on a sweetened drink from time to time, get a children's size.

Sources: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, July 3, 2013, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



