



Blackbird Clinic PLLC

Winter 2007 Newsletter

HAPPY HOLIDAYS: PREVENTING THE "SUGAR BLUES"

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- ✓ *For all ages and a variety of health conditions*
- ✓ *Addressing the underlying causes of disease*
- ✓ *Using a holistic approach*
- ✓ *Safe and effective natural therapies*

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Ever wonder why you or your family may feel cruddy after the holidays? It may be due, in part, to the "sugar blues", which are the negative effects of excess consumption of sugar. Symptoms can include bloating, fatigue, feeling hung over, depression, irritability, and fluid retention. What can be done to prevent the sugar blues and still enjoy holiday sweets and treats?

First off, some helpful hints: A) make sure you and your family have had a nourishing meal before diving into holiday desserts. This may lessen the tendency to overindulge on sweets. High fiber foods help to slow the spike in blood sugar. B) Eat or drink some high quality protein with your sweets, such as milk, soymilk, raw nuts/seeds, cheese or yogurt. The protein will help to slow digestion and decrease the sharp rise in your blood sugar. C) Avoid drinking sweet beverages (including fruit juices, alcohol and sodas) with holiday treats in order to avoid a double dose of sugar. Instead, opt for water, tea (green tea helps to modulate blood sugar), milk, or unsweetened mineral water, which will help to dilute the sugar load. D) Make your own wholesome holiday treats, low in refined sugars and carbohydrates (see recipes). Bring them with you to holiday parties and festivities.

E) Have a supply of xylitol gum in your car or purse for you and your family to chew after sugary treats if a toothbrush is not handy. Xylitol has anti-cavity properties.

Sugar: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

We all know that sugar is not good for you when it is refined and processed. Sugars ending in "ose" on an ingredient label-this includes fructose, sucrose, and glucose (and corn syrup) have been stripped of their natural goodness, leaving a compound that significantly inhibits the immune system.

It is also true that not all sugars are bad for your health. Some can be very beneficial. Policosanol, a sugar cane extract, for example, is an alternative to cholesterol-lowering statin drugs and can lower triglyceride levels.

Another beneficial sugar extract is D-mannose, which is found naturally in cranberry juice. It is used to treat bladder infections caused by E.Coli bacteria. Instead of adhering to the bladder wall, E.Coli adhere to the D-mannose, which is then eliminated during urination.

Xylitol is also on the list of beneficial sugars. It has anti-cavity properties (usually in the form of gum, mints or toothpaste). One study showed that mothers who chewed xylitol gum during their pregnancies had children (who were also breast fed) with fewer cavities as compared to the offspring of mothers who had fluoride treatments. Xylitol is used in intranasal sprays to protect against sinus and ear infections. It prevents bacteria from adhering to the cells that line the nose and sinuses.

Apple Cinna-Muffins

Moist, dark, and wholesome! (High fiber and no refined sugars)

1 cup whole wheat flour
¾ cup wheat bran
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons grated orange rind
½ cup finely chopped apple
¼ cup raisins
¼ cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)

Juice of ½ orange
7/8 cup buttermilk
1 beaten egg
¼ cup blackstrap molasses
1 tablespoon oil

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan. Toss dry ingredients together with a fork. Stir in orange rind, apples, raisins, and nuts. Combine the orange juice, buttermilk, egg, molasses, and oil. Stir the liquid ingredients into dry in a few swift strokes. Pour into greased muffin cups, filling them at least two-thirds full, and bake for approximately 25 minutes. Makes 12.

Sweet & Spicy Nuts

4 cups whole, raw, unsalted walnuts, almonds and/or pecans
¼ cup agave syrup* or maple syrup
¾ teaspoon mild chili powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon cumin powder
¼ teaspoon sea salt (optional)
1/8 - ¼ teaspoon cayenne (optional for added heat)

Preheat oven to 325°. Lightly oil rimmed baking sheet. Combine nuts and syrup, coating thoroughly. Spread nuts evenly into single layer onto baking sheet. Blend all spices together and sprinkle evenly over nuts. Bake until toasted (fragrant and lightly colored). Shake pan every 5 minutes to assure even toasting. Nuts can burn quickly, so watch closely—about 15-25 minutes. Once toasted, remove from oven and transfer to parchment paper for cooling to room temperature. Store in refrigerator up to 2 months or in freezer up to 9 months.

*a low glycemic index sweetener, found at natural food stores.

Recommended Natural Sweeteners:

Raw honey can be a health-promoting sweetener. It keeps well and never spoils. Honey contains two different sugars: Dextrose, which is assimilated very quickly, gives the instant boost of energy the body needs, and Levulose, which is absorbed more slowly and maintains the sugar level for some time. Honey's double-action sugars can quickly satisfy a craving for sweets and tend to maintain that sense of satisfaction for a while. It also has anti-bacterial properties. (Important note: Honey is never indicated orally for infants.) Three natural sweeteners which will not spike glucose levels and are safe for diabetics are: **Agave nectar**, **Lo Han Guo** and **Stevia**. These are from plants and can be found in natural food stores. Stevia is an herb that has been used as a sweetener in South America for hundreds of years. After centuries of use in Paraguay, and decades in Japan, there has yet to be a complaint that Stevia, in any of its consumable forms, has produced any harmful side effects. For diabetics using artificial sweeteners such as sucralose (which does not cause a spike in blood sugar), we recommend a gradual use of Stevia. You can initially use Stevia in drinks like tea, coffee or lemonade. There are many cookbooks available with recipes using Stevia.

Sucralose: A Safe Artificial Sweetener?

What about substituting refined sugar for artificial sweeteners? Have you been wondering about the safety of sucralose, which is most commonly known as **Splenda**™? We are led to believe that the product can be ingested with little regard for potential side effects. Besides, it's the weight loss we're wanting...right? Have artificial sweeteners been the savior of Americans ever-expanding waist lines? Let's look at the data. Historically, all other artificial sweeteners have been heavily marketed as products that will help you lose weight. However, it is clear that the majority of Americans are not winning the battle of the bulge. Since 1980, the obesity rates and consumption of artificial sweeteners have both soared. What makes the consumer think that sucralose is going to make a difference?

According to Consumers Research Magazine, "There is no clear-cut evidence that sugar substitutes are useful in weight reduction. On the contrary, there is some evidence that these substances may stimulate appetite."

Sucralose is manufactured chemically by adding chlorine to sugar. This involves chemically changing the structure of the sugar molecules. Research in animals has shown that sucralose can cause a multitude of problems in rats, mice and rabbits such as: shrunken thymus glands (a gland that is a key component of our immune system), swelling of the liver and kidneys, reduced growth rate, aborted pregnancy, and diarrhea.

There are no long term human research studies on sucralose. According to the Medical letter on Drugs and Therapeutics, "Its long-term safety is unknown."

Reports have shown that another artificial sweetener, **aspartame**, can, when ingested, cause migraines, urticaria, eye pain, depression, epileptic seizures, or fibromyalgia in susceptible people. Aspartame is an effective ant poison according to recent anecdotal evidence! (see <http://www.proliberty.com/observer/20060612.htm>)

You no longer need to buy into the myth that artificial sweeteners: #1 will help you lose weight and #2 are safe for consumption. With no established system for monitoring and tracking post-approval adverse effects, how can it be established whether large-scale and long-term consumption of sucralose is safe? If you are continuing to consume sucralose and other artificial sweeteners, you are part of the grand experiment. As we've already mentioned, there are many other healthy and natural sweeteners that can be used to replace the artificial ones and even white sugar.

Here's to enjoying the holidays, Sugar-Blues free!

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