

NEWS OF NUTRITION

The sweet truth about sugar

It seems sugar has gotten a bad wrap.

The majority of consumers wrongly think that a teaspoon of sugar has a whopping 70 calories, according to a study by The Sugar Association. The truth is that sugar has just 15 calories per teaspoon.

That means people may not be saving as many calories as they think when they reach for a yellow, pink or blue packet of artificial sweetener.

The obvious question is: How did we become so misinformed? Have all the sugar-free products, artificial sweeteners, anti-sugar diets and sugar-buster books biased our perception?

Browse a supermarket and you'll likely find sugar-free or reduced-sugar products in almost every category from jams and jellies to ice cream, cookies, breads, salad dressings and cereals. But are they better for you?

Recently, the Associated Press asked five nutrition scientists to evaluate newly introduced "reduced-sugar" kids' cereals. The scientists found that the reduced-sugar version of popular kids' cereals provided no reduction in calories or improved nutritional content over the regular sugar versions. The replacement ingredients provided the necessary bulk and texture to the reduced-sugar cere-

als but offered no nutritional or caloric advantage.

According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA) 2004 position paper on the use of nutritive and non-nutritive sweeteners, "Nonnutritive sweeteners added to the diet have been shown to promote a modest loss of weight... The prevalence of obesity has increased substantially at the same time as the consumption of nonnutritive sweeteners has increased."

Nutritionists say the best advice overall is to read nutrition labels and know what's in your food. Low sugar doesn't necessarily mean low calorie or better for you. Eat a healthy, balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other fiber-rich foods, plus calcium-rich dairy products. And you can add sugar, with only 15 calories per teaspoon, to make many of those healthy foods tastier. A bowl of fresh berries, homemade oatmeal or unsweetened yogurt tastes great with a sprinkling of brown sugar.

Just because a food contains sugar does not make it a food to avoid.

For more information, visit www.sugar.org.

Food fact: A teaspoon of sugar has just 15 calories. ■

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HEALTH AWARENESS

Nondiet secrets

Many people may be surprised to learn that some of the world's top models actually add food to their diets to slim and revive themselves.

Bodies have the uncanny ability to totally regenerate, even when they've been abused by a year of stress, junk food, worry or even disease.

Says Lizanne Falsetto, former model: "The most powerful thing we can do for our bodies, minds and spirits is to fuel with pure food. Our society teaches 'losing weight' as a positive when in fact most diets rob our bodies of needed balance and drain our natural vibrancy. I never starve myself. The natural by-product of good nutrition is a slim and healthy body."

Falsetto is CEO of one of the nation's largest natural nutrition bar companies. Its all natural thinkThin, thinkOrganic and thinkGreen bars are made from whole, real food to make good nutrition easy. Many doctors might agree with Falsetto that ingesting real food calories

is akin to adding silver dollars to a piggy bank, as opposed to stuffing it with slugs that weigh a lot but have no value.

For more information, visit www.thinkproducts.com. ■

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Healthy Dieting Secrets

- If you cannot pronounce all the ingredients, don't eat it.
- "Think" about fueling your body with food just as you'd fuel your car.
- Choose "real food" over processed or packaged.
- Add whole and green foods to your diet. Skip pasta and bread.
- Buy the foods that make you feel vital and give your mind clarity.

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HEALTH HINTS

Beat those "motivation zappers"

If you're like most women who exercise, one of your biggest motivation zappers is finding time to work out.

In fact, a Self magazine survey cited "lack of time" as the No. 1 reason women bow out of exercising.

How can you find more time to exercise? Consider lowering your goal. According to Meaghan Buchan, Self's fitness director, too many women make exercise an all-or-nothing proposition. "Shoot for just 10 minutes of exercise rather than a whole hour if you're short on time," she says. "The key is to do something, rather than nothing."

Try these additional tips

for sticking to a fitness routine:

• **Problem #1:** You'd Prefer To Stay Home-Fifty-nine percent of exercisephobes don't feel like leaving their homes to exercise.

• **Solution:** Stay Home-A study in The Journal of the American Medical Association found that people who used a home cardio machine lost weight. If a treadmill isn't your thing, try a DVD. Check the Web site www.collagevideo.com for its staff favorites. "10 Minute Solutions: Rapid Results Pilates" is one that needs no equipment and has received great reviews. Buchan calls it a good choice because "Pilates builds bone and muscle strength and has cardio and flexibility benefits, too."

• **Problem #2:** I Don't See Results-Many women say the benefits of exercise take too long to see.

• **Solution:** Mix It

Up-The best way to bust through an exercise plateau (and to start seeing results) is to keep changing your cardio pace, says a study at Laval University in Quebec. Exercisers who alternate moderate- and high-intensity intervals burned nine times more fat than moderate-only groups. If you're strength training, try changing the number of reps and weight routinely for maximum results.

• **Problem #3:** Exercising Is Too Expensive-Many women feel the cost of the gym outweighs a gym's benefits.

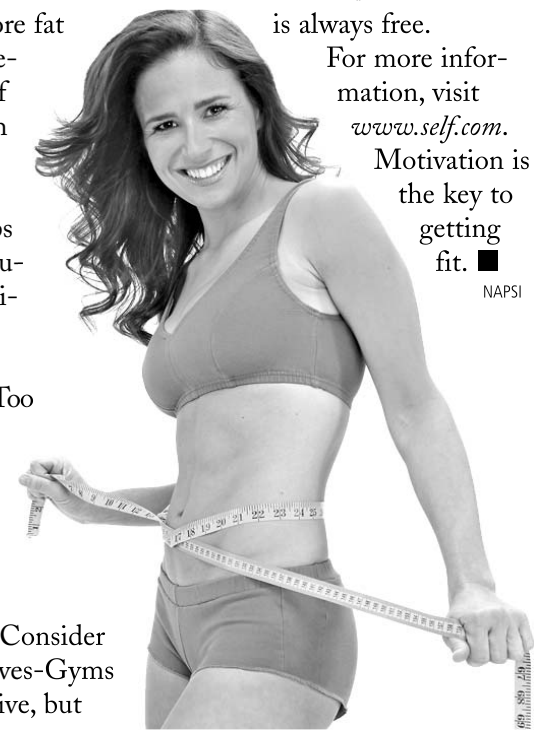
• **Solution:** Consider The Alternatives-Gyms can be expensive, but

a study in Physician and Sports Medicine found that not joining one could cost more. It showed that nonexercisers average at least \$330 more yearly in medical bills than do active people. Also, remember that many DVDs are under \$20 and a walk is always free.

For more information, visit www.self.com.

Motivation is the key to getting fit. ■

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MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

Sweet dreams more important than you think

According to health experts, it is very important for children to get enough sleep, from birth to adolescence.

But how much is "enough" sleep? Although each child is unique and has different sleep requirements—for example, most (but not all) children under the age of 4 require daytime naps—there are reasonable expectations. Consider that the average 2-year-old needs about 13 hours of sleep per night, while a 4-year-old can get by with about 11 1/2 hours.

Kids ages 6 to 9 need about 10 hours of sleep a night. Bedtime difficulties can arise at this age from a child's need for private time with parents, without siblings around. Try to make a little private time just before bedtime and use it to share con-

fidences and have small discussions, which will also prepare your child for sleep.

Sleep is important for growing and developing children. Not only does sleep provide an opportunity for the body to physically rest, it's the time during which, according to recent research, the brain consolidates or reinforces what a child has learned or observed during the day. Not surprisingly, sleep-deprived children tend to not do well at school. Other symptoms of sleep deprivation in children include fatigue, inattentiveness and listlessness. There can also be less obvious symptoms including irritability, impatience, fussiness and even aggressive behavior.

Another positive aspect of sleep is the opportunity for children to dream. In "slumberland," the imagination can run wild, filling youngsters' heads with fanciful thoughts and magical wishes.

One popular movie, now available on DVD,

presents a unique child's-eye view of dream time, as well as important life lessons about friendship and working together. "The Sweet Dreams Movie"—Strawberry Shortcake's first big-screen adventure—follows Strawberry and her pals to the Land of Dreams as they try to stop the Peculiar Purple Pie Man's evil plan to take over Sandman's Dream Factory and steal all of the dreams. Along the way, these "berry" special friends learn the value of working together to help make dreams come true.

"The Sweet Dreams Movie" DVD, from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, comes packaged with special strawberry seeds so girls everywhere can create their berry own Strawberryland. To learn more, visit www.foxhome.com/strawberryshortcake/.

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