

# Will A Spoonful Of Sugar Make Your Child Overweight?

by Althea Zanecosky, MS, RD, LDN

*Foods sweetened with sugar substitutes provide healthy alternatives for children.*

Childhood obesity is on the rise. According to a recent National Health and Nutrition Examination (NHANES) survey, almost one-third of American children can be described as overweight—an increase of nearly 20 percent from a study a decade ago. Fortunately, there's a lot parents can do to keep their children from becoming overweight.

While many people associate sweetness with table sugar, called sucrose, this is just one type of sugar that provides this taste.

There is also sugar in fruits, called fructose, and many foods contain added sugars such as corn syrup, honey and high fructose corn syrup. All sugars are carbohydrates containing four calories per gram and after digestion they travel through the bloodstream where they are used as fuel for the body.

Sugar substitutes, also called low-calorie sweeteners, supply flavor but add little or no calories.

Limiting the intake of sugary foods, which often contribute few nutrients to the diet, can be a positive step in decreasing the number of American children who are overweight. Many health experts suggest using a sugar substitute like aspartame to replace the sweetness in some of your child's favorite

foods. Before being approved by the FDA, sweeteners undergo extensive safety testing to be sure they are safe for consumption by children and pregnant women. According to the American Dietetic Association, children can safely consume aspartame as part of a diet consistent with the Food Guide Pyramid.

Snacks are an essential part of any child's diet, providing energy and nutrients.

"The challenge is getting children to snack less on high-sugar foods and more on nutrient-dense snacks from the Food Guide Pyramid," says Keith Ayoob, a registered dietitian from the American Dietetic Association and a pediatric nutrition expert at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. He recommends "sweet"

snacking on low-fat, sugar-free yogurt, fresh fruit, raisins and other dried fruit, 100-percent fruit snacks, sugar-free flavored gelatin, fruit juice pops made with reduced sugar juice and sugar-free flavored water.

Nutrition experts agree sweet foods can be part of a healthful diet. The key is moderation—to ensure that sweet foods do not crowd out more nutrient-dense foods. Sugar substitutes have the potential to serve as effective weight management tools when used together with physical activity and healthy food choices.

• Althea Zanecosky is a registered dietician, national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association and a mother of two daughters.

NAPSI

QUESTION & ANSWER

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST

## Living Naturally

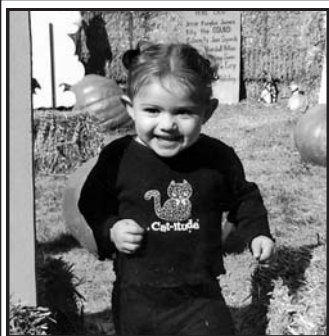
**Q:** We're expecting our first child. How can I minimize my baby's exposure to the chemicals that seem to be part of almost everything?

**A:** Today, man-made chemicals are present in most health and food products. Sometimes they serve a primary purpose, as with the active ingredients in a cold medication. Avoiding chemicals entirely is probably unnecessary. Your OB/GYN is the best source of information on what products are safe. The drugstore.com™ Web store has a chemical-free "Natural Store," where you will find everything from cleaning supplies to food and personal care items, as well as products formulated especially for babies and young children. A new line called "Earth Mama Angel Baby™" includes products designed especially for mothers and new babies. To make the best choice for you and your family, educate yourself about natural products, including the vitamins, minerals and herbs they contain. The American Pharmaceutical Association publishes its "Practical Guide to Natural Medicines," available at the Web store, [www.drugstore.com](http://www.drugstore.com). Read the label carefully and ask your doctor if you have any questions about any product.

NAPSI



**Sidney Catherine**  
Weight: 4lbs, 13oz  
**Jacqueline Patricia**  
Weight: 4lbs, 15oz  
Date of Birth: 11/12/05  
Proud Parents: Jeff & Erin Church  
Proud Grandparents: Mike & Pat Welsh & Tom & Lucy Church



**Sierra Sala**  
Weight: 7lbs, 14oz.  
Date of Birth: 05/06/04  
Proud Parents: Jon & Michael D. Sala



**Hailey Faith Silveira**  
Date of Birth: 12/30/02  
Proud Parents: Mark & Shellie Silveira



**Xavier Albert Sanchez**  
Weight: 7lbs, 8oz  
Date of Birth: 10/07/05  
Proud Parents: Melissa Alvarez & Albert Sanchez



**Mary Elizabeth Lueta Stone-Aguayo**  
Weight: 7lbs, 10oz  
Date of Birth: 05/20/05  
Proud Parents: Tanya Stone and Edgar Aguayo



**Riley Elizabeth Yates**  
Weight: 6lbs, 14oz  
Date of Birth: 05/18/05  
Proud Parents: Tony & Pam Yates



**Joseph Young**  
Weight: 4lbs, 10oz  
Date of Birth: 3/14/05  
Proud Parents: Troy & Darlene Young

**Chloe Young**  
Weight: 4lbs & 5oz  
Date of Birth: 3/14/05  
Proud Parents: Troy & Darlene Young



**Izaak Quetzalcoatl Zamudio**  
Weight: 9lbs, 1oz  
Date of Birth: 8/22/05  
Proud Parents: Guillermo Zamudio & Diana Ruiz



**Serena Mariah Zazueta**  
Weight: 6lbs, 8oz  
Date of Birth: 06/18/05  
Proud Parents: Joe A. & Celclia A. Zazueta

# The Physicians of OB/GYN ASSOCIATES OF THE CENTRAL COAST



**William Khieu, MD, FACS, FACOG**  
**Melissa Larsen, MD, FAAFP, FACOG**  
**Robert Park, MD, FACOG**  
**Hsin Liu, MD • Richard Hayes, MD**

*Listen to you  
Are easy to talk to  
Truly care  
&  
Address your  
concerns seriously*

*Premier Women's Health Specialists*

Comprehensive Obstetrical Care, High Risk Obstetrics, Abnormal Uterine Bleeding, Contraceptive Technologies, Infertility, Menopausal, Incontinence, Sexual Dysfunctions, Minimally Invasive Surgery, Endoscopic Surgery

Most private insurance accepted. Medicare, Medi-Cal/CAAH Accepted. Late term pregnancy transfer gladly accepted.

We Deliver at SVMH  
Same day appointment accepted for your urgent ob/gyn needs.

102 San Miguel  
Salinas, CA 93901  
751.6222 (OACC)

631 E. Alvin Ave, Suite J2  
Salinas, CA 93906  
(New Location Opens Feb 2006)