



## Sugar-free Sodas

Drinking regular soda increases your risk for diabetes. The same is true for fruit beverages and any of the sweetened drinks. But what about diet drinks? Are they okay or not?

There are differences in opinion about the safety of artificial sweeteners. The FDA continues to consider them safe, but many experts question how safe they really are. Personally, I have always liked the advice that if you don't have diabetes you are better off with the occasional use of real sugar. If you have diabetes, then sugar substitutes in small amounts could be a reasonable risk.

However, I think there is another point to consider here. Sugar substitutes are very, very sweet. Much sweeter than real sugar. They increase your craving for sweet things. I suspect that they make you hungrier in the long run and end up triggering you to eat more!

This may be why preliminary studies have shown that both regular and diet sodas are linked to Metabolic Syndrome (which raises the risk of diabetes and heart disease; learn more about it on my website). We'll learn more as the research continues.



## Carbohydrates: How Much Should You Eat?

This is sort of a trick question because there is no one right answer that fits everyone. Some people seem to be 'carb sensitive' and do better with less. Others, usually those with a lean build or who exercise extensively, do better with more.

Many of the people I work with have cut way back on their carbohydrates – but then have trouble with overeating between meals. Cutting back *too much* is counter-productive.

Carbohydrates are the main source of calories in the diet. When you cut out carbs, you either drop your calories so low that you get hungry later (which can show up as carbohydrate cravings), or you compensate by eating more meat (which increases your saturated fat intake and risk for diabetes and heart disease). You can replace some of the carbohydrate calories with monounsaturated fats, but it is wise to pay attention: fats are high calorie and add up quickly.

Often people who avoid carbs at mealtime end up snacking on chips, cookies, refined crackers, and other foods that don't have the fiber or nutrition content of the foods that they passed up at mealtime! Generally you are better off eating more for your meals and keeping your snacks lighter. See the September Wellness News for more on whole grains.

How much is enough? A very rough rule of thumb is 1-2 servings of carbohydrate (ie starch or grains) per meal. That

could mean one or two servings of cereal (check the box for a serving size) or two slices of whole grain toast at breakfast. Lunch could be 1-2 slices of whole grain bread, 1/3 -2/3 cups of grain, or two corn or whole wheat tortillas. Dinner could be 1/3-2/3 cup of grain (ie brown rice or barley), and 1/2 - 1 cup of beans, whole wheat pasta, corn or potato. These are minimum amounts, some people will need more.

Most people feel better as they add complex carbohydrates, but occasionally someone feels worse. If this happens to you, you could have a wheat sensitivity or celiac disease: check the nutrition section of my website for more information.

## Don't Get Spooked by Halloween Candy!

October is the beginning of the food holidays. Grocery stores are already displaying big stacks of Halloween candy. It helps to have a strategy so that you don't get mindlessly sucked in to eating more than you meant to.

There are many different ways to approach it. Consider these suggestions and choose the ones that fit for you:

Don't buy Halloween Candy until the last minute. Yes, it does mean that there is less selection, but that makes it even easier to buy types that don't appeal to you.

Select healthier choices if you can find them. If you buy candy bars, choose types that are less tempting for you.

Don't open bags of candy before Halloween night. Once the bag is open it is easier to keep picking at it. Store bags out of sight and ideally in a location that is not readily accessible.

Decide that you won't eat candy at work. Bowls of Halloween candy seem to make their way into offices and break rooms this time of year. Take your own snacks (fruit and nuts are good choices) and eat them at pre-scheduled times.

Instead of eating Halloween candy just because it is there, make a conscious choice to eat your favorite foods in moderate quantities. It is not that you can't ever enjoy sweets, but make it worth the calories. When you do indulge, enjoy it!

### Want Support?

*Whether you want a single conversation or ongoing follow-up, it helps to have someone to help you choose a strategy and stay focused. I charge \$45 for each 30 minutes; and options range from a 30 minute phone call to 1 or 2 hours in person. Call me to discuss what would work best for you.*

### Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

I work with people who are ready to stop dieting and are looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy.

*Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!*

