



Spring Stirring

Spring unfolds a little at a time; new life is stirring. It's good to take in the rhythms of our earth and the life that is bursting forth around us. It reminds us of our own natural cycles. What does spring evoke for you? What is unfolding and awakening in your life? What daily practices do you have that will help this new life take shape? Pay attention to what stirs around you and within you. Honor your own seasonal shifts.



Sugar: How Much is Too Much?

Ever notice how the more sugar you eat, the more you want? Not everyone craves sweets – but for those of us who do it can play havoc with our weight. I grew up with the habit of having cookies after lunch and a dessert every evening. Sweets and desserts are part of our landscape; we can't escape them. But let's face it; most of us get too much.

Moderation is a good thing. The less we eat, the less we crave them; it gets much easier. They are empty calories. Worse, excess sugar and refined carbohydrates can increase our risk for diabetes and heart disease (especially if we carry excess weight around our bellies.) Just an extra 100 calories a day can translate to 10 pounds of weight gain a year (it's not quite that simple, but you get the point.)

Unless you don't get triggered by sugar, it doesn't work to eliminate sugar entirely. For most of us, if sweets are forbidden, then when we do eat them, we are more likely to eat too much. We rationalize that if we are never going to eat this again, we'd better get as much as we can now! Setting ourselves up for all or none (now or never) doesn't work. What does work? How can you find a balance between the extremes of having none or having it all?

Three days is the magic number. If you go three days without sugar, you stop craving it. A few people report it takes them longer, but three days is pretty usual. It can be a challenging three days. Savoring naturally sweet (but unsweetened) teas like Good Earth, Almond, Raspberry, etc., can help. I find that artificially sweetened foods and especially diet sodas tend to keep the craving for sweets alive, even though they technically don't have sugar.

Try it out: avoid sweets for the three days – or even a week. And then experiment with what kind of ongoing pattern works for you. It is much easier to create a new pattern when you are not 'under the influence'. My own observations are that I can have something sweet weekly without much impact on my weight or cravings, but more than that gets edgy. See what works for you.

I have also noticed that regularly enjoying a small amount of dark chocolate (70+% of cocoa) has a small enough amount of sugar that it doesn't trigger sugar cravings for me and yet satisfies my desire for something sweet. Note that it has to be dark chocolate – other chocolates have more sugar and have the nasty habit of demanding that you eat more.

Note: This strategy does not address emotional eating or the individualized needs of a person with diabetes. And yet it can help. It is always a matter of trying things on and discovering what works for you. More on emotional eating next month. . .

Creating Health

My program, [Have Healthy Habits in 12 Weeks](#), continues to give me an opportunity to learn more about what impacts our ability to care for ourselves and how we create lives of health and wellbeing. Here is something I've noticed:

At War With Our Body

We all know that our culture is obsessed with hard, lean bodies. And our obsession is compounded by knowing the medical risks of the fat that we carry. And yet I am still surprised by how pervasive and deep this obsession is. We are a nation at war with our body.

So how does being in battle serve us? Does it make us more aware? Does it help us make better choices? Does it help us stay healthy? It can be a motivator, but it can also be a trap.

When we reject our bodies, we run the risk of disconnecting. It is too frustrating, so we just shut it off. We can't distinguish between what the body is telling us and what food is telling us – so we tune it all out. Only food seems to be a little more persuasive. Somehow we manage to hear the cookie calling, but not our body telling us we're tired.

When we do battle with our body, we shut out a big part of our lives. In a disembodied state it is harder to care for ourselves. We shut out full use of our senses, and our ability to generate pleasure and to be fully present.

To recover our full selves, we need to come back into relationship with our body. We can't be whole without it. And even though the relationship can be painful in the beginning, making that connection is the beginning of healing. And a step towards true health.



Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Health and Wellness Coaching and Nutrition Consulting. Discover the three core practices that contribute to your energy level and your state of well-being: Awareness, Eating to Sustain Energy, and Movement.

Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!



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