

## Slowing Down A Sweet Tooth

We all know sugar can pack the pounds on... but it tastes so good! What's a dieter to do?

There's some good news and some bad news about sugar. First the good: it's not necessary to give it up entirely, even when you're on a weight loss diet. Now the bad: most of us eat way too much!

Remember Dixie Cups? I can recall being treated to those little 3-ounce ice cream cups on special occasions at school. There was an art to carefully dipping out melting ice cream with a wooden spoon. Today, kids are getting their sugar hit from fast food restaurants where shakes and soda are readily available. Consider these facts: one 3-oz Dixie Cup has 9 grams of sugar and 90 calories; a medium shake has 60 grams of sugar and 720 calories. Whew! But there's more to the sugar-weight connection.

It's not just the obvious sources like cake, candy or soda pop that are the problem. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average person eats about 31 teaspoons, or about 500 calories, of *added* sugars a day. Sugar is added to many foods in the form of high fructose corn syrup, brown rice syrup, honey, and molasses. Take a healthy sounding snack like fruit yogurt for an example. One 6 oz. container of fruit yogurt has 30 grams of sugar. Even peanut butter has 3 grams of added sugar per 2 tablespoons of a typical store brand.

De-sugaring your diet can be a big help in losing weight. Here are some simple ways to get started.

- Read labels. Sugar is sugar whether it is listed as high fructose corn syrup, brown rice syrup, fructose, or honey.
- Replace low nutrient/high sugar snacks with foods that contain natural sugars. When the craving hits, try fruit or a no added sugar canned fruit.
- Avoid drinking beverages that contain high fructose corn syrup as an added sweetener.
- Use spices such as cinnamon and ginger to enhance the sweetness of fruit and cereal.
- Think quality. One chocolate truffle – or a bag of M & M's? Be selective and savor sweet treats.