

# HEALTHY SWEETS

By Owen Rothstein

The irony of being diabetic with an enormous sweet tooth isn't lost on any of my friends and family. I suppose that it isn't lost on me either. The reality is that I'm a Type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetic, and well-controlled, so indulging in sweets isn't really any worse for me than it is for all of the non-diabetics in the world (I'll get back to that in a minute).

My go-to as a kid was always ice cream. Whether it was Friendly's Peppermint Stick ice cream on a sugar cone, twirled soft-serve with rainbow sprinkles on the boardwalk at the Jersey Shore or an oversized bowl of Breyer's Mint Chocolate Chip at home, I just loved me some ice cream. As my tastes developed, I shifted a bit towards custards and cream-based desserts like Crème brûlée, but it's all really based on ice cream. Chocolate and I have also had a long, rich love affair. I like the really dark stuff now (particularly in chocolate chip cookies), but that wasn't always the case. The final leg in my holy trinity of delightful indulgences is fruit pies. Strawberry rhubarb is a list topper, but pales when placed beside my friend Linette's grandmother's banana cream pie. I haven't tasted it in years, but still dream of it frequently.

When I was first diagnosed as diabetic, I (like many Americans) didn't know very much about nutrition. My initial mindset was that I'd have to swear off of sweets forever or risk a horrible demise. It was only after meeting with a Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) and a Nutritionist that I really started to understand the role of nutrition in my disease and future. Now, I'm over 15 years in, and doing great. I enjoy sweets frequently and, as long as I'm smart about it, I'll be able to for the rest of my life.

"The craving for sweets is primarily biological," says Dr. Louis J. Aronne, director of the Comprehensive Weight Control Program at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. It seems that there are genetic indicators that couple with learned behaviors to help form one's bend towards sweets. You can read more about that independently to help figure out what factors may be most affecting you personally, but I can help you learn some new behaviors to help keep your sweet tooth from taking a bite out of your health.

# FITNESS FLYER

As I mentioned above, the "rules" that apply to me apply to just about everyone. Controlled portions, judicious timing and smart choices in ingredients can make all the difference. I'm not saying that these choices are completely guilt-free, but then, we'd be going by my sense of guilt and not yours, so here goes:



1. Find a way to incorporate super-foods like strawberries, blueberries or dark chocolate (more than 70% cacao) into your indulgence. Berries and dark chocolate are both packed with antioxidants which can help your body fight off cell-damaging free radicals. Berries and dark chocolate are also both naturally lower in sugar than most other sweets.

2. Add some healthy fats into the mix. Science tells us that fat helps us feel satiated and that the healthy stuff (monounsaturated fats) are necessary for good health and, believe it or not, weight loss. If you get creative with your ingredients, you may be surprised at the results. A friend of mine makes a chocolate avocado pudding that is out of this world and olive oil is all the rage with a few of the local, gourmet gelato shops.

3. Mix up the fruit. I don't just mean in a bowl, I mean try different types of fruit throughout the year. Keep it seasonal. A great tip is to try baking different kinds of fruit. The baking can intensify the flavors and give you a burst of natural, healthy sweetness. The opposite is true too...grapes out of the freezer are like built-in portion control and nothing could be easier.

4. Break out the blender and whip up a delicious smoothie. You can mix up a smoothie to quench just about any craving. If you mix in some rolled oats and peanut butter, you'll slow the absorption of any of the sweet items that you add like chocolate or fruit. When having a smoothie as an indulgence, try to keep the size to about 12 oz.

5. If you are going to have dessert after a meal, wait a little while until you dive in. If you give yourself a little time to digest your meal, it'll make it easier to have a slightly smaller slice of pie or cake. 30 -45 minutes is a good rule of thumb.

6. Change the way that you shop. There is a big difference between a scoop of ice cream and a SCOOP of ice cream. Instead of leaving it up to your own discretion, buy pre-portioned sweets like ice cream sandwiches. It'll help keep the temptation in check.

I don't plan on giving up sweets any time soon, and you probably don't have to either. Halloween is right around the corner and it's a perfect time to start your shift from the king size snickers to the minis or even the bite size. They taste about the same, but they pack a lot less of a calorie wallop!

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Owen Rothstein  
Foodie & Nutrition Enthusiast