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ST. COLUMBA'S HEALTH CABINET PRESENTS

The Reduce Sugar Email Program

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Opening Scripture

"Kindly words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste, wholesome to the body."

Proverbs 16:24

(A better alternative to sugar)

How are your goals progressing?

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the reduce sugar program. At this point, I would like to encourage you to reflect on your goals and your progress:

- Are you finding it too easy to meet your goals? If so, you may want to make things a little more challenging. Up the ante a little...instead of allowing a soda once a week, revise it to once every two weeks. A little challenge can increase your motivation. Without it, you may get bored with your goal and unwittingly give up.
- Are you finding your goals too challenging? If so, remember it is OK to scale back if needed. Goals that are too challenging can lead to fatigue, which might lead to giving up.

Thanks to everyone who entered their goals into the survey posted in the 1st and 2nd issues. Below is an illustration of things that people are planning to limit:



I was also pleasantly surprised to see that people also submitted goals that included healthy foods and activities. Here is an illustration of things people are planning to increase:



Notice of correction:

In last week's issue, I made an error in the Applesauce Blueberry Muffins Recipe. It should read "1/3 cup of unsweetened applesauce."

Sugar and Taste Buds

Do you know that you can change your preference for sweet things so that you can enjoy foods with less sugar...without noticing that these foods have less sugar in them?

In their study of perceived sweetness, Wise, Nattress, Flammer and Beauchamp (2016) had participants rate the intensity and pleasantness of vanilla puddings and raspberry beverages that had various levels of sugar in them.

They then asked one-half of these participants to slash 40% of the sugar from their diets, while the other participants were asked to just keep eating as normal.

Those in the reduce sugar group were asked to replace high-sugar foods with items higher in complex carbohydrates, protein, and/or fats and to dilute sugary drinks (fruit juices, sodas, etc.) by 50% with water or seltzer. They were also asked to not use artificial sweeteners.

By the second month of the diet, those in the reduce sugar group rated the sweetness of the pudding and beverages as being higher than those in the normal diet group, suggesting that they were becoming more sensitive to the amount of sugar in these foods and could enjoy them at lower levels of sugar concentration.

A link to the study could be found [here](#). I'll also attach a pdf of the article to this email.

Easy Ways to Change Your Sugar Preferences

You can replicate the above study in your own daily life. One way to do this is to gradually reduce the sugar in an item that you enjoy frequently. The idea is to reduce the amount of sugar in that item while hardly noticing the reduction. This works well for things like chocolate and juice!

How to do this with chocolate

A piece of **dark** chocolate can be a satisfying dessert and there is even evidence that suggests that it can have a few health benefits (see [link](#)). However, it is best to eat dark chocolate with the highest percentage of cacao that you can stand. The higher the percentage, the less sugar is added to the product. Many of us are used to milk chocolate or dark chocolate with low percentages of cacao—dark chocolates at higher levels taste bitter. But we can change that. When eating dark chocolate start with the highest percentage that you can stand and then gradually graduate to higher levels until you get use to eating chocolate in the 80%:



How to do this with juice

You can do this with juice by adding increasing amounts of water over a period of time. Start by adding about a 1/4 cup of water to your glass before filling the glass with juice. Next month, increase the added water to 1/2 cup. Continue increasing the amount of water month after month until you only need a splash of juice (or none at all) to be satisfied.

Low Sugar Recipes

Disclosure: I am not a big proponent of artificial sugars or margarine, so I no longer cook with these things. Rather I use "real" sugar and butter very sparingly. However, I encourage you to take charge of your own health journey, you may substitute artificial sweeteners and margarine in the following recipes as you see fit.

Also, due to copyright laws, I cannot recopy full recipe instructions that are not my own adaptations below. Hence, why I list the websites and not full instructions for some recipes. Please let me know if you are unable to access.

Hot Chocolate without Added White Sugar

As noted above, dark chocolate can be a satisfying dessert. The darker the chocolate (that is, the higher the cacao percentage) ...the less sugar is added to it. Try this recipe with dark chocolate in the 70%, then try to graduate to higher percentages. The added milk will also help with the perceived bitterness of the chocolate.

20 g of a dark chocolate bar, broken into pieces (I like to use Trader Joe's dark chocolate lover's chocolate bar with 85% cacao*)

1 cup of milk

Dash of cinnamon (optional)

1. Melt chocolate using a double boiler OR if you don't have one—like me—use two nested pots (with one being slightly smaller). Boil about an inch of water in the bottom pot and picture the other one on top. See picture. Place the dark chocolate in the top pot. Stir constantly until melted.



2. Add milk to the chocolate. Stir together **briskly with a whisk** until well blended. Add cinnamon, if desired.

*I am not affiliated with Trader Joe's in any way. I just like some of their items!

Low Carb Chicken Cacciatore Stuffed

Spaghetti Squash

Spaghetti squash is a DELICIOUS alternative to regular spaghetti. It almost has the look and feel of regular spaghetti, but is healthy and (personally I think) tastes better! Try this interesting dish that mimics a classic Italian dish.

- 1 large spaghetti squash or 8 cups cooked
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 cup sliced onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 red pepper or 1 cup sliced
- 1 yellow pepper or 1 cup sliced
- 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 can (28 oz) [Redpack crushed tomatoes, BPA free](#)
- 1/4 cup [Redpack tomato paste, BPA free](#)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil

For the instructions, click [here](#)

Thanks for participating in the third week of this program. If you are not already on the weekly email list or if you have any questions or comments, please email me at chanellegordon@gmail.com.