

## Loving Sweets

By Dr. Carol Ann Fischer, BS, DC, ND

We celebrate our love of sweets on Halloween and Valentines Day. Valentines Day candy and chocolate seem to represent the sweetness of the affection that we have for others.

Chocolate lovers know that there is a health benefit from consuming this delicious treat. It actually contains the relaxing mineral, magnesium. One of the many benefits of magnesium is that “feel good” feeling. Magnesium actually calms the nerves, relaxes muscles, and reduces irritability.

Magnesium is associated with calcium. The body needs more calcium than magnesium at a ratio of 32:1. Calcium and magnesium are only two minerals of the many minerals and trace minerals that make up the human body.

It is the desire for magnesium that can drive the urge to eat chocolate. This desire indicates a mineral deficiency of magnesium, and calcium. Magnesium helps the body metabolize fats, proteins and sugars, as well as minerals and vitamins, like Vitamin D. Where there is a magnesium deficiency, there are other missing nutrients too.

There are good chocolates and bad chocolates. A bad chocolate is defined as one that has very little cocoa and a lot of fillers, additives, sugars and high fructose corn syrup. These chocolates should be avoided when looking for the “happy and satisfied” feeling that good chocolate can create.

Sugar goes by many names. There are 42 different names for sugar used in commercial foods. By naming sugar something other than sugar, most people do not realize that they are in fact consuming sugar.

Eating bread, pasta, rice or potatoes is basically eating sugar. Skipping meals alters your blood sugar, causing a stronger desire to eat sugar. Fruit juice, wine and pop, are basically flavored liquid sugars.

The average American consumes 120 pounds of sugar a year, a low estimate. Before there was packaged food, the average sugar consumption was 30 pounds a year. Sugar has been implicated in many degenerative health conditions from Diabetes to Heart Disease. There are at least 146 reasons to not make your diet high in sugar.

The body has to use additional stored vitamins in order to efficiently metabolize sugar. This depletes key vitamin and mineral reserves, like magnesium, calcium and the whole Vitamin B complex. When you eat more sugar than is needed by your body, weight gain is inevitable. Excess consumed sugars are stored as unwanted body fat.

A dietary analysis can easily determine if you are consuming too much sugar. Most people are not aware of the amount of sugar they consume. The key is the total amount of sugar that you consume in ratio to the fats and proteins in your diet.

Simple non-invasive tests can efficiently determine nutritional deficiencies. Eating chocolate and some sweets is acceptable when your body has all the vitamins and minerals that it needs to handle the sugars.