



The World's Favorite
Belgian Chocolates

The Role of No-Sugar-Added Foods in a Healthy Diet

Q&A with Mary M. Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN

Assistant Professor of Medicine, Brown University



Mary M. Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN, is an expert in the field of nutrition. An assistant professor at Brown University Medical School and chief research dietitian at The Miriam Hospital, her main research interest is in how food will affect health. Dr. Flynn has authored more than 20 scholarly articles and abstracts and is co-author of the book, Low Fat Lies, High

Fat Frauds and the Healthiest Diet in the World.

What does “no-sugar-added” mean?

In this context, “sugar” is a food science term for carbohydrate – not just the sugar (sucrose) derived from sugar cane and sugar beets. The only carbohydrates present in a no-sugar-added food are those that occur naturally in the products’ ingredients. For example, milk is a natural source of carbohydrates – as are bread, pasta, etc.

Are no-sugar-added foods sugar-free?

It’s possible for a no-sugar-added food to be sugar-free. But most have ingredients with naturally occurring carbohydrates. That’s why they’re labeled “no-sugar-added” instead of “sugar-free.”

Are no-sugar-added foods low in calories?

Most no-sugar-added foods have fewer calories than their regular sugar counterparts, but they are not necessarily low in calories. A healthy diet requires moderation, and that’s true of no-sugar-added foods too.

Who are “no-sugar-added” foods for?

Most no-sugar-added foods were created for diabetics, who have to regulate the carbohydrates in their diets. Diabetics need a diet that is balanced, varied and tracks carbohydrates consumed. If that sounds like a healthy food plan for the rest of us, you’re right. One-third of adults in the U.S. are overweight

and/or have “metabolic syndrome,” a condition of insulin resistance and abdominal obesity. So no-sugar-added foods can benefit almost all of us.

Is lower sugar/carbohydrate intake beneficial as we age?

Most people need fewer calories to maintain weight as they age. It is thought that the current obesity epidemic is the result of as little as an extra 100 calories a day. Any food that helps decrease calorie intake should help control body weight as we get older.

Do no-sugar-added foods contain sugar substitutes?

That depends on the food. Some contain familiar sugar substitutes like NutraSweet or Splenda. Others may include “sugar alcohols” like maltitol. Derived from natural grains, maltitol has 75% to 90% of the sweetness of sugar, fewer calories, and does not promote tooth decay. As a natural grain, it also contains fiber, which is more slowly absorbed. It does not turn into glucose, so it doesn't raise blood sugar levels.

Are no-sugar-added foods fat-free?

That depends on the particular food. But no-sugar-added foods are not necessarily fat-free. And in my opinion, that's a good thing.

Are you saying that fatty foods are good for you?

I'm saying that a little fat – the right fat – is a good thing. In fact, it's important to get a healthy fat at every meal. Fats slow down the absorption of foods in your stomach, so you feel fuller longer. This will help you avoid cravings between meals. Ironically, *fat-free foods often help make us fat* – because they're not as satisfying.

What about trans fats?

Trans fats – also known as partially hydrogenated oils – are commercially made fats. They are foreign to the body and related to just about every disease. You should avoid trans fats, especially if you're trying to make a healthier, no-sugar-added food choice.

Why do we crave sweets?

Human beings inherently like sweet, fatty foods. We see this in virtually every culture around the world. Sweets are pleasurable. They release chemicals in our brains that make us feel good.

What about studies that say that chocolate, particularly dark chocolate, is good for you?

The health benefits of dark chocolate are well publicized. It's certainly better than pure sugar candy. Cocoa is plant-derived, just like fruits and vegetables, and contains potent antioxidants. Cocoa also contains phenylethylamine, which elevates mood. Dark chocolate contains more cocoa than other forms of chocolate, so it's the healthier choice. Still, you have to eat a lot to get the full health benefits. And unfortunately, chocolate has calories. So a no-sugar-added chocolate is a better choice for most people.

So can you eat chocolate every day?

Some people can eat a little chocolate every day. But when you always reward yourself with a sweet flavor, the desire for more sweets can mushroom out of control. You begin to crave it more often. If you love chocolate, treat yourself to an ounce or two a couple of times a week. But do it right. Choose a good one. I find that European chocolate has better flavor. It may cost a little more, but it's a better treat. You'll be more satisfied, and you'll eat less.



What about no-sugar-added chocolate?

The same theory applies to no-sugar-added chocolate. However, it usually has fewer calories, which is appealing to – and healthier for – many people. Still, choose one that tastes great. You want to be able to savor an ounce or two – really enjoy the rich taste – and feel satisfied. After all, you're eating chocolate. The point is to indulge a little, so you don't end up indulging a lot.

###

For complete background on Guylian No Sugar Added Belgian Chocolate, [click on](http://www.esmiller.net/guylian_nsa/)

http://www.esmiller.net/guylian_nsa/

Contact: Ellen Miller (401) 724-3773 ellensmiller@att.net

Amy Briskin (212) 794-6644 abriskin@aol.com

You are receiving news from Guylian Chocolate because you work in food, health, nutrition, and/or fitness journalism and opted in via E.S. Miller / Marketing Communications.

Our mailing address is:
E.S. Miller Marketing Communications
75 Capwell Avenue
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Copyright (C) 2009 E.S. Miller Marketing Communications All rights reserved.