

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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What's a Litesse, and Is It Really Lite?

Isn't it awful the way you have to walk through the bakery in some groceries to get to the fresh produce section? That's deliberate planning by the store, you can be sure, to entice us to buy more sweet, gooey things than we need! Last week, heading through the bakery, I noticed a stack of chocolate cakes, with a big sign "Sugar Free"! Hmmm, let's see what's really in these, and how do they compare to the 'regular' chocolate cream cakes on the next table?

In the first place, the sugar-free cake was only about half as tall as the regular cake. That's normal. When you take several cups of sugar out of the recipe, there will be less batter. Reading the ingredient label was only partly enlightening. There was flour and oil, the normal kind. There was concentrated fruit puree, which has plenty of sugar but doesn't have to be labeled as 'sugar'. It's fruit, and the sugar is put there naturally by the plant. So while no sugar was added as pure sugar, there is still sugar in there. Then there was 'litesse'.

What is litesse? What does it do? Litesse is the brand name for a type of purified fiber. It's made of bunches of glucose, stuck together in long, tangled chains. Because of the way the glucose is linked together, and because the chains are tangled together, our bodies can't digest most of it. It provides very few calories, and lots of dietary fiber. Some bacteria can digest it, so it can actually help promote the growth of good bacteria in our intestines. Since we don't digest it, it only gives us 1 calorie per gram, instead of the 4 calories in a gram of sugar or 9 to a gram of fat. It also does not

raise blood sugar.

Besides all that, it has no flavor of its own, so it works very well in foods made with non-caloric sweeteners. It fills up the space left when cupfuls of real sugar are taken out of a recipe. Litesse also provides some creamy feeling to foods that are made with reduced fat. All of that made these cakes sound positively healthful.

But then I looked at the calorie count and portion size of the 'sugar free' cake and compared it to the regular cakes. Of course the first thing the label says for serving size is 'one-sixth of cake' or 'one piece'. That doesn't help at all. Behind that is the real truth - (47 g) or (58 g) whatever the weight of the piece actually is. It's the weight of the piece that they use to measure the calories, so that's what you want to read.

Here's where the shock hit! The serving size for the regular cake was larger AND it had fewer calories than the sugar free cake! Even with the litesse special fiber and fruit puree, you get to eat less of the sugar free cake, and get more calories out of it anyway! The flour and oil provide calories, the fruit puree adds concentrated sugar calories. There were almost 100 more calories in the piece of sugar free cake, and more of them came from fat.

The moral of the story? Don't believe the big-letter advertising signs. If you want to protect your heart, your health, and your weight, read the nutrition facts label. Just because the word 'sugar' doesn't appear in the ingredient list does not mean it's not there. And just because something as potentially healthful as litesse fiber is added does not mean that there are no calories. As is usually the case, the most healthful thing to do is keep walking straight through the bakery to the fresh produce section and fill up on fresh fruits and veggies.

This week's recipe is a little longer than usual, but it's good. It's low in fat, and

has a secret ingredient no one will ever guess to add fiber. Take it to your next picnic!

Secret Zucchini Brownies

2 C all purpose flour	1 C whole wheat flour
3/4 C brown sugar	3/4 C Splenda® sugar substitute
1/3 C vegetable oil	1/4 C baking cocoa
1/2 C plain, fat free yogurt	4 egg whites
1 tsp baking soda	1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla extract	1/2 C mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 C grated zucchini, about 3/4 pound	

Grease a 9 x 13 inch baking pan with non-stick spray, unless you have non-stick pan.

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Wash, trim and grate zucchini. Squeeze gently, and measure. Stir cocoa into zucchini and mix to break up lumps. Combine flour, cinnamon and baking soda in large bowl. Stir zucchini into flour. Beat sugar and Splenda, oil, egg whites, yogurt and vanilla together, then stir into zucchini mixture. Stir 2 minutes. Pour into prepared pan and spread. Sprinkle chocolate chips evenly across batter. Bake for 35 min, or until tests done in center. Cool, cut into 32 pieces (4 by 8).

Each piece has about 97 calories, less than 3 grams of fat, and only 17 g of carbohydrate.

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