

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Sweets for Your Heart

We all like sweets. Fifteen minutes after a baby is born it will suck and keep sucking if it is offered sugar water. Offered salt water, it will take one taste and spit out the nipple. So liking sugar is natural.

Sugar is a natural compound, although we purify it to make it white. Sugar is also a natural preservative. The original use of sugar frosting on cakes was to preserve them, to stop the growth of mold! Enough sugar will keep bacteria from growing. A little more will also stop most mold and yeasts from growing. Honey rarely spoils, partly because it has so much sugar.

Lots of sugar is also why jams and jellies don't usually spoil. There is enough sugar in them to stop most growth. There are some molds and yeast that can tolerate a lot of sugar. These are the ones that occasionally do show up on a jar of jelly. If you find mold on jam or jelly, don't try to scrape it off. Just throw the whole jar away. The molds that tolerate so much sugar are the same ones that can produce toxins that damage our livers. The jar of jelly is not worth the risk.

Fudge and nougat candies rarely spoil (if they last long enough!) because they have so much sugar. It should make us wonder why we want to eat them when there's enough sugar to kill something!

Unfortunately, lots of sugar does not preserve our health. Besides the damage sugar can do to our teeth, lots of sugar adds lots of calories to our diets. If we eat more sugar than we need for energy, it is turned into fat. That fat can clog arteries. It piles up

as pounds of fat on our hips, wraps around our heart and liver, and generally causes lots of problems inside and outside, such as making your clothes too tight!

A little sugar is not a problem for most people. But lots of sugar, or sugar every day, can create real problems for anyone. The more sugar we eat, the more exercise we need to do to burn it off. Of course, people with diabetes have to be extra careful about how they use sugar. They don't have to avoid it completely. They do have to spread it out over the whole day and balance it with protein and fat.

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, every store in town is encouraging us to buy sweets, chocolates, and candies of every sort for our loved ones. Kids buy them for their mothers, men for their wives, kids for their classmates. That brings up the question - Why do we want to give something that might be dangerous to someone we love?

So, this Valentine's Day, be nice to the person you love. If you are going to get a box of candy, just get a little one. Then get a huge basket of fruit to go along with it. If you know your loved one is on a diet, why torture them with chocolates? Take them out to dinner to a place you know has healthy choices on the menu! Instead of getting bags of candy for the children, make them heart-shaped pancakes for breakfast. You can make them pink hearts by adding some pureed strawberries to the pancake batter.

And while you're being nice to everyone else, be nice to yourself too. Switch to diet sodas. Stop smoking. Go take a long walk, with your sweetie at your side. Know the symptoms of a heart attack, in men and in women, and pay attention. If your doctor suggests you lose some weight, try to do so. Your heart, and your loved ones, will be much happier than a box of chocolates can ever make them!

This month's recipe is a fun thing to make for or with the children. Use it for

dessert on Valentine's Day.

Strawberry Pizza

1 roll frozen sugar cookie dough	1 qt strawberries
1 - 8 oz pkg light cream cheese, softened	1 tsp lemon or vanilla extract
½ C powdered sugar or sugar substitute equivalent	1 banana
half a canned peach, optional	1 Tbsp cocoa powder, optional

Slice the cookie dough and roll it together to fit a 12" pizza pan. Bake according to directions on the package until light brown. Let cool. Wash and cap the berries. Mash half them and mix with the cream cheese, sugar or sweetener, and extract. Spread evenly over the cookie crust. Slice rest of berries and arrange over cheese. Mash peach with fork until stringy, or slice into matchstick strips. Sprinkle over the berries. (This is the cheese.) Slice the bananas into rounds. If desired, dip one side in cocoa powder. Arrange over 'cheese'. (These are the pepperoni slices.) Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 8-10.

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