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Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

OUR KIDS ARE SWEET ENOUGH

America is drowning in sugar, especially children who are guzzling and devouring almost 64 pounds per year. That's over a pound a week and it is undermining the health of our nation.

One group is on a mission to change things.....**Sugar Free KIDS Maryland**, a state coalition launched in 2014. The group, a collaboration between MedChi, the American Heart Association, the NAACP, the Horizon Foundation, American Association of Student Councils, and United Healthcare Workers East are focused on enacting evidence-based policies to reverse this critical public health challenge.

According to Sugar Free KIDS Maryland

- this may be the first generation of kids that will live shorter lives than their parents, if we don't make any changes
- more kids than ever are at risk for adult-like diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure
- kids who drink sugary drinks daily are 7x times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes than their peers
- more so than any other single factor, regularly consuming sugary drinks greatly increases the risk that a child will develop type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and/or tooth decay as a child who does not

To find other options for beverages visit – **The Better Beverage Finder** found at <http://www.betterbeveragefinder.org/> You can search for drink options based on:

- Type of beverage – bottled water, sparkling drinks, flavored/vitamin water, teas/coffees, juice, soda, dairy, dairy alternatives, energy drinks, and sports drinks.
- Type of sweetener – none, natural, artificial and hybrid
- Caffeine

I was especially thrilled to see caffeine listed since many youth are consuming caffeinated drinks without even being aware of it. It is NOT a requirement to list caffeine on the nutrition facts label.

According to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the number one source of added sugars come from sugar sweetened beverages (soft drinks, fruit drinks, sports and energy drinks, tea, coffee). As expected, desserts and sweet snacks are the next major source (cookies, brownies, ice cream and frozen desserts, cakes and pies, doughnuts, sweet rolls and pastries.)

It is time to rethink our recipes and the use of added sugars. For ideas I highly recommend the webinar – America's Sweet Tooth: Using Fruits & Veggies to Create Delicious Sugar Substitutions, sponsored by the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH). You can view it at

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/americas-sweet-tooth-using-fruits-veggies-to-create-delicious-sugar-substitutions/>

In the webinar, award winning chef Jennifer Tyler Lee, tells how she developed recipes for *Half the Sugar All the Love*. This just released family cookbook features 100 easy, low-sugar recipes for every meal of the day. Developed with pediatrician, Anisha Patel, it busts sugar myths, teaches you how to read a nutrition facts label, and provides simple tips for reducing added sugars.

One feature I especially like are the recipes for condiments, sauces, spreads and salad dressings. For instance they use nectarines to flavor BBQ sauce instead of the standard high fructose corn syrup. Many of these types of products are loaded with added sugars and consumers don't even realize it. They might be avoiding sugar sweetened beverages and desserts but still get way too much sugar.

Every recipe in the cookbook has at least half the sugar or less and is made with real ingredients and nothing artificial. Our kids are sweet enough.....so join the movement to ditch the sugar!

TRIPLE BERRY TART

1 unbaked refrigerated (9-inch) pie crust
1/4 cup reduced sugar raspberry fruit spread
1 1/2 cups whipped topping
3 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 1/2 cups fresh strawberry halves or quarters
1/2 cup fresh raspberries
1 1/3 cups fresh or frozen blueberries, thawed
1 tablespoon powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 450 F. Unroll pie crust on large nonstick baking sheet, prick with fork. Bake 8 minutes or until light brown. Remove to wire rack; cool completely.

Place fruit spread in small microwavable bowl; microwave on high 15 seconds or until slightly melted. Remove from microwave. Spread evenly over piecrust leaving 1/2 inch border.

Beat whipped topping with cream cheese in medium bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended & smooth. Spoon tablespoonful's of whipped topping mixture evenly over fruit spread. Using back of spoon, smooth whipped topping layer. Arrange berries in decorative fashion over top. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. (Makes 8 servings)

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES {LOW SUGAR}, Author: Jennifer Tyler Lee

Makes about 1 1/2 cups; Serves 24

My rich, fudgy chocolate brownies from [Half the Sugar, All the Love](#) hit the mark with less than half the sugar of a boxed brownie mix--*Ours: 1 1/2 teaspoons vs Theirs: 4 1/2 teaspoons*. The secret ingredients are ones that none of my tasters could guess: sweet potatoes and nut butter. Sweet potatoes give these brownies a natural sweetness, while nut butter adds a creamy, rich texture—plus they're studded with chocolate chips. They don't need flour, so they're great for gluten-free families. If you use canned sweet potato puree, the whole recipe comes together in less than 10 minutes in the food processor, so you can satisfy chocolate cravings quickly.

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES {LOW SUGAR} (continued)

Nonstick cooking spray

1/2 pound sweet potatoes, peeled, cubed, and boiled until fork-tender

1/2 cup unsweetened almond butter or unsweetened walnut butter or unsweetened peanut butter*

1/2 cup coconut oil or unsalted butter (1 stick), melted

1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk

1/4 cup maple syrup

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

3/4 cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons semisweet chocolate chips (6 3/4 ounces)



1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 13 × 9-inch baking dish with parchment paper, leaving 2 inches of overhang on each side, and coat with cooking spray.

2. Combine the sweet potatoes, nut butter, coconut oil, egg, and egg yolk in a food processor. Process until very smooth, making sure no chunks of sweet potato remain, about 1 minute.

3. Scrape down the side of the bowl and add the maple syrup and vanilla. Process until combined, about 30 seconds.

4. Add the cocoa powder, salt, and baking soda and process until all the dry ingredients are incorporated, about 1 minute more. Fold in 1 cup of the chocolate chips.

5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, spread it into an even layer, and sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons chocolate chips. Bake until the top is set and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 27 to 30 minutes. Let the brownies cool slightly. Cut into 24 bars.

Quick Tip

You can substitute 1 cup canned sweet potato puree for the fresh sweet potato.

What Kids Can Do

Little chefs can measure the ingredients and sprinkle the chocolate chips.

Make Ahead

The brownies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

*Note

Unsweetened sunflower seed butter or tahini can be substituted for people with nut allergies.

Nutrition Information (1 brownie):

Calories: 136 | Added sugar: 1½ teaspoons or 6g | Carbohydrates: 12g | Sodium: 97mg | Saturated fat: 30% of calories or 5g | Fiber: 2g | Protein: 3g

Resource: <https://www.52newfoods.com/double-chocolate-brownies-low-sugar/>

Excerpted from *Half the Sugar, All the Love* by Jennifer Tyler Lee and Anisha Patel, MD, MSPH. Photographs by Erin Scott. Workman Publishing ©2019.

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Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND, is a licensed Registered Dietitian, Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition Dietetics, and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

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