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AMERICA'S SUGAR ADDICTION – THE RESULTS AIN'T SO SWEET

Bulging waistlines tell the tale; complete sugar avoidance needed for some chronic conditions

RALEIGH (June 9, 2009) – Summer is upon us and for many, thoughts turn to swimsuits and how to look our best. Although summer fashion is diet motivation for many, doctors say regulating sugar intake for better year-round health should be the focus.

As reports continue to mount regarding American's expanding waistline and declining overall health, many medical experts cite excess sugar as the culprit. Most processed foods, including breads, breakfast cereals, salad dressings and even microwave meals, contain a great deal more sugar and sweeteners than one would suspect. It's estimated that the average American consumes two to three pounds of sugar each week.

As tastebuds become more accustomed to elevated levels of sugar, people tend to lose their taste for healthier -- less sweet -- alternatives. Medical experts say healthier eating habits are needed to curb to the mounting wave of obesity in the general population.

"One-third of American children are overweight, and as adults these same children will have problems with diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol, all of which increase the risk of heart disease," said Dr. Joanne Pizzino of the Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers. "Study after study confirms these findings and for many, cutting back on sugar intake would be a good place to start."

For most, sugar can be eaten and enjoyed in moderation without being a liability to health. However, a strict diet excluding all sugar may sometimes be a recommended part of the treatment regimen for Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Center patients.

"Not only does excess sugar affect the health of the general population in obvious ways, we also find it to be a specific concern for our patients suffering from fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome. We take a very close look at the patient's diet," said Pizzino.

It's estimated more than 12 million in the U.S. suffer from fibromyalgia, a debilitating condition characterized by a feeling of exhaustion, muscle and joint pain, specific tender points, body aches and muscle stiffness.

"Many times our patients have underlying conditions such as Candida Yeast/Fungal overgrowth throughout their bodies," said Pizzino. "Sugar must be avoided entirely because it feeds those yeast infections and actually leads to even more discomfort and pain."

Because sugar is so prevalent in processed foods, patients often find it difficult to adjust to a strict diet. Patients are allowed to use natural sweeteners such as Splenda for cooking and

baking and must be diligent when grocery shopping or dining out. However, after settling into a new healthier routine, a majority experience good results including increased energy, lifting of brain fog, improved sleep and have less pain associated with their fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue.

“There’s a lot of truth in the old saying ‘you are what you eat,’” said Pizzino. “Everything we put into our bodies has an effect. A healthier lifestyle and diet with less sugar can be beneficial to everyone. You simply have to be aware and diligent about your choices.”

FFC develops, operates and manages 12 outpatient “Centers of Excellence” in the U.S. for the treatment and ongoing care of people diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue & Immune Dysfunction Syndrome, and Unrelenting Fatigue. Centers are currently open in Atlanta, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Fort Worth, Las Vegas, Norwalk, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland and Seattle. Additional centers will open this summer in Baltimore, Phoenix, Raleigh and Tampa. For more information, please visit www.fibroandfatigue.com or call (866) 443-4276.

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