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Good Cheap Fun! Crafts That Cost Nothing

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The World Health Organization recommends that added sugars make up no more than 10 percent of our daily caloric intake, but that's easier said than done. Gradually reduce the sugar with these easy strategies, however, and your family may not even notice it's missing:

Mix it up. "Many cereals have a nonsugar twin," says Harriet Worobey, head of the Nutritional Sciences Preschool at Rutgers University. Combine the two — frosted and unfrosted corn flakes, for instance — in a plastic container. Each time you refill, add a little more of the unsweetened variety than you did the last time.

Nix the frosting. "Anything that's glazed or frosted can increase the amount of sugar you're getting by as much as 50 percent," says food scientist Doris Derellian.

Let them eat fruit. Take a tip from Connie Bennett, author of *Sugar Shock!*, and turn fruit into dessert in your freezer. Freeze fruits like bananas, strawberries, and blueberries, and serve them in a bowl. "It's a great way to get your kids used to eating fruit in smaller portions," she suggests.

Time Your Treats



When you serve that sweet treat is almost as important as what is in it. That's because the way our bodies metabolize sugar is affected by what we eat with it. When you eat a sweet treat along with fiber, protein, and even fat — which are metabolized more gradually — you slow the rate at which the sugar is absorbed and blunt the post-sugar blues.

TIMES TO AVOID: First thing in the morning (you'll be setting up a blood sugar spike-and-slump that could result in a craving for more sugar) and right before bed (both the spike, and hunger from the slump, will keep you up), says Judy Fulop, a naturopathic practitioner in the wellness program at Chicago's Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

BEST TIME FOR A TREAT: "Right after a balanced meal," says dietitian Bridget Swinney. The protein, fat, and fiber will blunt the spike.

TREATS BETWEEN MEALS: If you have to have one, add some fiber and protein and a little bit of fat. Tip: You'll get all three from a handful of nuts. If your child eats the nuts first, she may be content with less of that sweet snack.

Web Sites We Love: Learn more about sugar at these smart sites:

askdrsears.com Get a lesson on sugar from the author billed as America's pediatrician. Click on "Nutrition," then "Sugar."

calorieking.com Find out how much sugar is in hundreds of foods, including fast foods and major brands.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER N. HOLEY

Pediatrics recommends that kids ages 1 to 6 years drink no more than 4 to 6 ounces of juice a day, and kids ages 7 to 18, no more than 8 to 12 ounces. After that, try serving water. For extra kid appeal, keep a pitcher in the fridge, garnished with colorful citrus slices. Or serve fruit spritzers: seltzer with a dollop of juice.

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