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## The Answer to the Sugar Conundrum

Whether you have prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, or are just concerned about the calories in the sugary treats this holiday season, what should you do? Go without and feel deprived, or indulge and pay some sort of price? Let's take a look by beginning with a few questions.

Why do you want to reduce your sugar intake? Do you want to reduce your caloric intake? Is it because you know you have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes? Are you concerned about gaining weight over the holiday season? Once you know why you want to avoid sugar, you can start to look at the sugar conundrum in a more reasonable way.

Let me go back to the example of stressing about putting some jam on a piece of toast—that's what prompted me to tackle this issue in the first place. I don't eat toast very often, but I like a little jam on it. The top of the jam had crystallized; that shows you how often I open that jar. As I was removing the crystallized chunks, it made me think of all the questions and comments I get about sugar.



How much sugar is in the jam? I used about half a tablespoon and it contained about eight grams of sugar. With four calories per gram, that's just over 30 calories. Keeping the bread aside, let me just make a blanket statement: if eating 30 calories from sugar is going to cause your blood sugar to go out of whack, you have much more serious problems: you're not controlling your blood sugar very well. But messed up blood sugars just don't happen for most people, even those who are prediabetic.

Will one sweet cause you to become a sugarholic? Will you go out of control? That's a different question. If you know you'll not be able to control yourself, avoid sweets. But if you can enjoy a small piece of pie or a couple of candies without going nuts, there's nothing wrong with it.

### The Bottom Line

Sugar is much maligned these days, but let's look at the science: glucose is pure energy. While it's true that it doesn't have vitamins or minerals in its processed form, your body can use it immediately for fuel. That's why it's in sports drinks.

The real issue with sugar, whether you're concerned about diabetes or your weight, is one of volume. Sugar, and thus those wonderful holiday treats, can be a part of a healthy diet if you do two things: control the amount that you eat and limit how often you eat them. And that includes those of you who have prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.

It's your body. Just choose wisely today and every day.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**



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