

Yes, You Can Cut Sugar in the New Year!

By Chef Tracy Lauth

We all want to live healthier. I do. And, if you are like most people, your New Year's resolution included either losing weight, eating better, or cutting sugar. Maybe all three. In our house, we have already been living this for a while. You see, my husband was recently diagnosed pre-diabetic. Yikes! What is that? It means that if we don't make permanent changes fast, he will end up on medications for the rest of his life. It was a shot over our bow that we better get our life under control.



I am a classically trained chef, and we love and eat great food. But the problem was processed, ready-to-eat and homemade foods that were full of sugar and carbs. We were slaves to homemade bread, brownies, and Moose Tracks ice cream and had to make some changes fast. So, I did some research and revisited my recipes from when I owned my catering company. After some tweaks, nips, and changes, we are eating great again. We are living a life completely free from processed sugar and you can too!

Change Happened Fast

- The first thing I noticed was that my waist immediately dropped two inches. The next thing is very strange – my shoes fit better. I wear western boots and they started to slip on easier and now, I rarely need boot hooks to put them on or a boot jack to get them off. Hmm. Interesting.
- I wear a Fitbit and the reports said I was sleeping better with less tossing and turning, and a deeper, more restful sleep pattern appeared.
- Now here is the BIGGEST change. My resting heart rate dropped from mid-70's to low 50's. Yes, my heart liked the change. I have always had healthy blood pressure so that did not change much.
- We purchased a glucose monitor, and we were able to drop our blood sugar to under 99. Big improvement from a fasting level of 110++
- We are less tired in the afternoon, take less naps, and are more active, which our dog loves! Just from cutting sugar.
- I lost eleven pounds in the first month, seventeen as of writing this article.

Everyone is different and has different goals

I used many sources for recipe and menu inspiration including Keto, Paleo, American Diabetes Association, and common sense to come up with our menu. I also thought about time and mess. As a chef, I like to keep things simple and delicious. It was easier than I expected.

So, rather than tell you what to do, I will be sharing our weekly meal plan complete with recipes, sources, and easy, uncomplicated substitutions that you can make to put your spin on your food. All are available from your store or online. I will include sourcing as well.

How I approached our Challenge

Step One: Start with Simple Substitutions

We cut all processed sugar and as many carbs from our diet as was possible and still enjoy our food. Yes, we still like to enjoy our food. We incorporated sugar substitutes and found that some are quite delicious when used right. I make brownies, pancakes, and cookies that are amazing and sugar-free.

I will list the sweeteners we liked in the recipes. All are available from your local grocery store or online. When possible, I will include brand and sourcing as well.

Step Two: Keep it Simple

For this to be successful, it must be easy – right? So, I schedule one big cooking day a week where I make more than half the foods we will eat daily such as steel cut oatmeal, soup, and fresh, homemade Greek yogurt, etc. Our Instant Pot is great for making huge batches you can store in the refrigerator.

Step Three: Fresh is Better

No more frozen processed ready to eat meals. We buy fresh foods including produce, meat, fish, dairy, etc. In the winter, when berries are out of season, I purchase large bags of flash frozen organic mixed berries to keep on hand. Fresh Greek yogurt sweetened with Monk Fruit, vanilla and cinnamon topped with fruit compote is a great breakfast. I even make a mean BBQ sauce with sugar substitutes that no-one can taste the difference.

Step Four: Delicious Desserts are an Essential Food Group

I always have treats on hand. No, I did not say “Healthy” I said “Treats.” I make a mean low-fat, sugar-free, No-Bake Cheesecake with Almond Crust. Lasts for days. How about shortbread cookies dipped in chocolate or Dark Chocolate Almond Bark? All sugar-free, wheat free, and delicious.

Step Five: Eat to Live, Don’t Live to Eat!

By far the hardest lesson was portion control. Obviously, moderation is the key to success and the only way to achieve this is was to figure out how much food we needed – no more. We get a sense of satisfaction from eating real food that prevents us from overeating and cravings.

So, if your goal is to reduce or eliminate processed sugar from your diet, eat healthier, maybe lose some weight, and feel better in the New Year, then follow along. You might just like it.

Watch for recipes, food plans, and updates as we journey into this new phase of our lives.

Chef Tracy Lauth is a leader in the food lifestyle revolution promoting healthy relationship with everything food. Visit ChefsBestCo.com for recipes, videos, and more on your journey to a healthier you.