

## Baked Italian Tomatoes

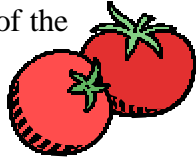
- 2 large ripe tomatoes
- 1 slice whole-wheat bread, crusts removed
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut each tomato horizontally into two halves. Scoop out the seeds, and then place tomato halves cut-side down onto a double thickness of paper toweling and let drain for 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a blender or food

- processor, make crumbs of the whole-wheat bread. In a bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, garlic, olive oil, oregano, basil, thyme, salt, and pepper.
3. Spread some of the crumb mixture onto each tomato half.
  4. In a casserole dish, bake the tomatoes, uncovered, for about 25 to 30 minutes, until the tomatoes are soft, but not mushy, and the topping is brown.

*Makes 4 servings - Serving Size: 1/2 tomato*  
*Vegetable Exchanges: 1 - Fat Exchanges: 1*

Cal: 75    Cal from Fat: 40    Chol: 5 mg  
Total Fat: 4.5 g    Sat. Fat: 1 g  
Sod: 195 mg    Fiber: 2 g    Sugars: 3 g  
Total Carb: 7 g    Protein: 3 g



# Diabetes Newsletter

Control your diabetes.  
**For Life.**

PIKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

AUGUST, 2008

## Visions of Sugarplums . . . . . *The Truth About Sugar and its Substitutes*

**Does eating too much sugar cause diabetes?** Satisfying your sweet tooth does not cause diabetes. If you have diabetes, however, learning to tame a sweet tooth will help you reach your blood sugar goals.



**I've heard that people with diabetes should not eat sweets. Is this true?**

In the old days, people with diabetes were told to avoid sweets. Now we have learned that white table sugar (sucrose) has the same effect on blood sugar as an equal amount of any carbohydrate. Sugary foods can be substituted for other carbohydrates in your diabetes meal plan, but remember that foods high in sugar are often high in fat and calories, too. Use them in moderation as part of a healthy diet.

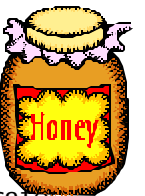
**I gave up all sugar. Now, instead of cookies for a snack, I eat a pound of grapes. This is better for me, right?**



Grapes, indeed all fruits, have more nutritional value than traditional sweets, but you

can have too much of a good thing! Remember that your total carbohydrate intake is what matters. One pound of grapes equals approximately 80 g of carbohydrate. If you use the Exchange Lists for Meal Planning you know that 1 fruit, 1 bread/starch, or 1 milk exchange equals 15 g of carbohydrate. A pound of grapes is more than 5 exchanges, which is probably more carbs than you have allowed for a snack. I recommend that you have fewer grapes. You could also check the label on your favorite cookies and figure out how many you could have for a snack. It is sometimes okay to have cookies!

**Is honey a better choice than white sugar?** Honey is still sugar. One teaspoon of sugar has 4 g of carbohydrate while 1 teaspoon of honey has 5 g. If you prefer the taste of honey, go ahead and enjoy. Whichever you choose, use a measuring spoon so you can accurately count the carbohydrates.



**What are sugar alcohols?** Alcohol in this term refers to the chemical structure of this type of sweetener. Sugar alcohols are used to sweeten foods in the same way artificial sweeteners are used. Sugar alcohols do not contain the alcohol that is found in beer, wine and spirits. Compared to sugar, they have fewer calories and less impact on blood sugar. But, unlike artificial sweeteners, they need to be accounted for in your meal plan. This process is described below. A disadvantage to sugar alcohols is that eating too much of them can cause bloating and diarrhea.

**What does "net carb" or "impact carbs" mean on a food package?** These terms do not have a standardized definition and are

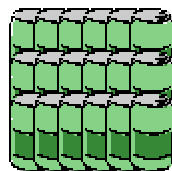
not approved for use on food labels by the FDA.

Sometimes, they may lead you to believe that a product

is lower in carbohydrates than is actually true. You can find the most accurate information on the nutrition facts label. Since dietary fiber is not digested, you can subtract it from the total carbs on the label. Also, if a product contains sugar alcohols, you can subtract 1/2 of the sugar alcohols from the total carbs. For example, if a food contains 20 grams of total carbs per serving with 2 grams of fiber and 8 grams of sugar alcohol, you can adjust the total carbs to 14 grams.

**I've heard that artificial sweeteners can cause things like cancer and multiple sclerosis. Is this true?** The FDA has approved 5 artificial sweeteners for use in

the US. They are saccharin, aspartame, sucralose, acesulfame-k and neotame. Scientists have studied these food additives extensively and found them safe. The FDA has established an Acceptable Daily Intake for each sweetener. This is the amount that can safely be eaten on average each day over a lifetime. For example, the ADI for aspartame (brand name NutraSweet, Equal) for an average adult is approximately 18 cans of diet soda. Few, if any, people would drink more than that in a day.



**What is Stevia?** Stevia is an herb whose extract is much sweeter than sugar. It is used as a sweetener in various parts of the world. The FDA has not approved Stevia as a sweetener in the US because of concerns over its potential ill effects on the kidneys, heart and reproductive system. However, it is available as a dietary supplement with claims to improve blood pressure and blood sugar. Dietary Supplements are not regulated by the FDA. Consult with your physician or dietitian before you use Stevia or any other dietary supplement.

**I eat sugar free cookies, ice cream and pie. These are better for me aren't they?** Be careful. Some people have the misconception that "sugar free" foods will not affect their blood sugar. This is not always true. Sugar free does not mean carb free. These products may contain flour, milk, fruit or sugar alcohols, all of which contribute carbohydrates. Read the nutrition facts label to get the real story.

**What about fructose? That is better than sucrose for me, isn't it?** Not necessarily. You may have seen foods sweetened with fructose (fruit sugar) in the "diabetic" food section of the grocery store, and it is true that fructose used as a sweetener does cause blood sugar to rise more slowly than sucrose (white sugar). However, it can negatively affect your heart health. For this reason, the American Diabetes Association has recommended avoiding the use of fructose as a sweetener. This is not the same as fruit itself, which has many benefits.



**I hate diet soda. Will it hurt me to have a regular soda only a couple times a week?** Don't write off diet sodas because you disliked one brand. Try a variety of diet drinks to find one that you do like.

Water is another great choice. If you still want to drink regular soda, do so wisely. A can of regular soda contains approximately 45 grams of carbohydrate (3 bread/starch exchanges). For most women, this would



use your total amount of carbs for a meal. Avoid sipping on a regular soda throughout the day because it will provide a constant source of carbohydrate that will affect your blood sugar. If you drink regular soda, check your blood sugar 2 hours afterwards to see if you are still in your blood sugar target. If your sugar is high, cut back on regular soda or drink something different.

**I have heard that high fructose corn syrup makes people overweight. What is it and should I avoid it?** High fructose corn syrup is sweeter and cheaper than sucrose (white sugar) and extends product shelf life, so it is widely used in fruit-flavored drinks, regular soda and a variety of processed foods. The rate of obesity in the United States increased at the same time as our increased consumption of high fructose corn syrup. However, it is unclear whether or not it is to blame. Regardless, foods that contain high fructose corn syrup are often high in calories and low in nutrients. So read food labels and select wisely.



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**Pike County Diabetes Program**  
**(217) 285-4407, 113 East Jefferson Street, Pittsfield, Illinois 62363**

**Diabetes Support Group**

**SEPTEMBER - Thursday, September 11, 2008, 4-5 pm**

**OCTOBER - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 4-5 pm**

**NOVEMBER - Thursday, November 13, 2008, 4-5 pm**

*Look for your next newsletter in November.*