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Why we should hate the sugar we love

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As much as we may love sugar, I don't think I would be wrong to suggest that it really hates us!!! The large amounts of sugar found in many of the foods we consume are causing major health problems for millions of people.

Why we should hate the sugar we love

by Renee S. Frazier

Special to the Tri-State Defender



**Renee
Frazier**

I think it's safe to say that we all love the taste of sugar. Sugar is designed to be very pleasing to our taste buds. Whenever we go shopping, we are tempted by the "sugar section" –those aisles filled with wonderful cookies, cakes and candies, and let's not forget sodas.

Although, as much as we may love sugar, I don't think I would be wrong to suggest that it really hates us!!! The large amounts of sugar found in many of the foods we consume are causing major health problems for millions of people. How can something we love so much be so bad for our health?

The answer is found in the object of our affection. Sugar contains a lot of calories and too many calories can lead to a serious disease called obesity.

Yes, I said disease!

And this disease can lead to other serious and even life-threatening health problems.

Here in Memphis and Shelby County, our rate of obesity is steadily on the rise and as a result, our numbers for diabetes, heart disease and hypertension are higher than the state and national averages. Those ailments are categorized as chronic illnesses and once you have them, they do not just go away. Often times, you have to deal with them for the rest of your life and you may become dependent on medication to do so. I, myself, am a diabetic and to try and fight this chronic disease I lost 40 lbs., and now eat very little sugar. I work hard everyday to teach myself to dislike and avoid sugar. I believe the key to fighting obesity is to teach our children to avoid sugar because our love of sugar is affecting them too.

Children learn early to love sugar. We often feed them sugar-filled treats as snacks and then we even give them sugar to help wash it down. Sodas are very high in sugar. One small soda can contains up to 9 teaspoons of sugar! This bad habit of feeding children solid and liquid sugar has led to an alarming increase in the number of obese children in the Memphis area. Not only that, but more and more doctors are diagnosing children with Type II diabetes, an illness that was once diagnosed primarily in adults. Parents can prevent this from happening by watching what their children eat and limiting the amount of sugar they eat and/or drink.

My husband and I worked very hard to make sure our son did not fall in love with sugar. He was

allowed to eat hardly any candy and very little amounts of cookies, cake, ice cream, and pie. At home, we never drank soda with our meals. Sodas were allowed only on special occasions or when we went out to lunch or dinner. I often made his lunch and avoided including sugary snacks as much as possible. One of his favorites was cheese and crackers. Now even as a grown man, my son is still a big fan of cheese and crackers.

Parents must understand that monitoring your child's sugar intake is the key to fighting childhood obesity. Teach your children how to make better food choices and try to keep them away from the "sugar section" in stores. Talk to them about sugar and how it can lead to obesity and other health problems.

No child wants to be obese, believe me, I know from experience about being teased for being the fat kid.

Parents, my final words to you today are to work hard to make sure you and your children learn to hate the sugar we love. There's too much at stake not to.

(Renee Frazier, FACHE, MHSA, is executive director of Healthy Memphis Common Table. Contact her at renee.frazier@healthymemphis.org; Visit www.healthymemphis.org)