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Beware those summertime treats

Wise picks avoid excessive calories

BY JENNY LEE, CALWEST NEWS SERVICE JULY 8, 2009 COMMENTS (1)

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One milkshake is equivalent to a whole day's worth of calories for a child.

Glorious, decadent ice cream treats are synonymous with summer -- and some truly startling calorie counts.

Picking your treats wisely, however, can mean the difference between 1,500 calories and a mere 120.

Whatever you do, watch out for the milkshakes.

"Nothing can beat shakes," registered dietitian Gloria Tsang, of HealthCastle.com, warns. "They are the worst contender for a summer treat. For kids, one milkshake is equivalent to a whole day's worth of calories. For adults, it's at least two meals. Avoid milkshakes, or share them, at all costs."

But feel free to enjoy your gelato.

Gelato is traditionally made with milk rather than cream, and therefore usually contains fewer calories than regular ice cream, Tsang said.

When it comes right down to it, plain old ice cream really isn't all that bad, she said. The trouble comes from all the little extras such as syrup, sprinkles and whipped cream.

A medium Dairy Queen soft ice cream cone (199 grams) contains 340 calories. Order it dipped in chocolate, however, and you've just added 150 calories and 10 grams of saturated and trans fat.

A naked, half-cup scoop of ice cream will run you 150 to 220 calories, but the same ice cream in a waffle bowl with candy or cookie sprinkles, whipped cream and syrup can check in as high as 1,000 calories.

Almonds (typically a 25-gram serving, or about an eighth of a cup) will cost you 150 calories -- about the same calorie count as two regular Oreo cookies. But you'll get healthy fats, some fibre and some protein compared to trans fat, no fibre and no other nutrients in the cookies.

Is premium ice cream better for you? It's likely to be made of fat-rich cream, but ice creams made of milk may contain more additives. If it's any help, ice cream parlour products are likely to contain fewer additives, Tsang said.

For a little perspective on calorie counts: 300 calories is equivalent to a six-inch submarine sandwich; three pieces of fruit such as a banana, an apple and a cup of grapes; or two cups of pasta without sauce.

And hey, if you can forsake the cream in ice cream and just go for an ice-cold treat, two skinny Popsicles (the 81-gram Super Twin Popsicle) add up to only 60 calories, and a grande (16-fluid-ounce) Starbucks green ice tea is a conscience-soothing 80 calories.

But beware: Just because something isn't creamy doesn't mean it is low in calories. A large (40-fluid-ounce) 7-Eleven Slurpee contains 320 mean ones, Tsang said.

All calorie counts in this story come from either product websites or registered dietitian Tsang.

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NIcole July 09, 2009 - 6:56 AM

I NEVER worry about those summer treats as I'm so weight conscious already that I just don't eat or drink stuff like that. I truly believe that we are what we eat and I do all my own home cooking and exercise regularly because if you think that the medical in this country is going to save you later on, FORGET IT. Fast food eaters are a major problem now and I can't believe the number of FAT young people that I see around nowadays, its shocking.

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