

Inside This Issue

Sugar Substitutes

IDD and Mental Health

May is Mental Health
Awareness Month

Juniata Valley Out of
Darkness Walk

Practice Heat Safety

Health Alert

Springtime Activity for
Children/Adults with DD

New ONLINE HCQU
Training Calendar

Perfect Pita Pizza

Sign up for the monthly
Healthy Outcomes
newsletter:

HCQU@geisinger.edu

Don't forget to add new
staff!

Healthy Outcomes

Sugar Substitutes: Understanding your options

By Angela Esherick and Jill Fabri, certified diabetes educators at Geisinger

Not all artificial sweeteners are created equal.

Look on any grocery store shelf, and you will find more sugar substitutes than you could imagine — in kitchen staples like baked goods, diet soda, frozen desserts, canned fruit, and snack foods. Before you stock your pantry, a little research can help you find the right sweetener for your needs.



What are artificial sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners are food additives used to replace sugar. They sweeten food without adding extra sugar, calories, or carbohydrates. Popular types include:

Acesulfame potassium

Advantame

Aspartame

Neotame

Saccharin

Sucralose

Monk fruit (*Luo han guo*)

Stevia

(Sugar Substitutes-Continued on page 2...)

(Sugar Substitutes-Continued from page 1...)

Sugar alcohols (such as erythritol, sorbitol, mannitol, and xylitol) are another common artificial sweetener. These do contain calories and carbs, but they have less than regular sugar. Besides making things taste sweeter, sugar substitutes can help control blood glucose levels and boost weight loss. They are also popular with people following low-carb diets. And, because they do not contain actual sugar, using them will not cause tooth decay. But like sugar, they are best used in moderation.

Considerations when using them

Sugar substitutes may not be suitable for everyone. Before using them, consider the potential side effects of artificial sweeteners.

Cardiovascular risks

Some studies suggest that certain sugar alternatives, especially erythritol, may increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. More research is needed.

Increased appetite

For some people, using sugar substitutes may increase their cravings for sweets. They can also alter the way you feel hunger. And impact how your body manages blood sugar. Together, those things can lead to weight gain.

Stomach upset

For some people, sugar alcohols, stevia and monk fruit may cause bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Studies are also looking at a link between artificial sweeteners and gut health.

Get back to basics

Do not want to use an artificial sweetener? Try these natural versions instead. You may even have a few of them in your kitchen.

- Real fruit jam
- Banana puree
- Brown rice syrup
- Pure maple syrup
- Date sugar/paste
- Raw honey
- Coconut sugar
- Blackstrap Molasses
- Agave Nectar

Weigh your options

Before you switch from traditional sugar to a sugar substitute, talk with your healthcare provider. They can help you understand if using them is right for you. Or they can recommend other options to help sweeten the deal. [Geisinger Wellness Article](#) Published March 27, 2023



IDD and Mental Health

May is Mental Health Awareness month

and the goal of recognizing this month is to increase awareness around various mental health needs, reduce stigma around mental health, and increase access to services. Despite the high rates of co-occurring mental health and IDD, there is often a barrier to these individuals accessing appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

Many times, the mental health diagnosis is missed and not treated due to the IDD diagnosis or vice versa. One of the barriers to individuals receiving a diagnosis of IDD is that it requires standardized testing of cognitive and adaptive abilities by a psychologist before a diagnosis can be given. Many therapists are not comfortable diagnosing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) if they do not have experience with this diagnosis. Other barriers identified by Mcgilvery & Sweetland, 2012 include:

Diagnostic overshadowing – assuming behaviors that may be symptoms of psychiatric diagnosis is part of the IDD

Medication masking – medications minimizing symptoms of a psychiatric diagnosis

Communication deficits – the individual does not accurately report symptoms due to communication deficits

Atypical presentation of psychiatric disorders – some diagnoses present slightly different in individuals with IDD

Medical conditions – some symptoms may be assumed to be due to a medical condition instead of the psychiatric diagnosis

Episodic presentation – symptoms are not currently present, so not detected at the time of assessment

[Full article](#) By Julia Hood, Ph.D., BCBA, NCSP May 18, 2020



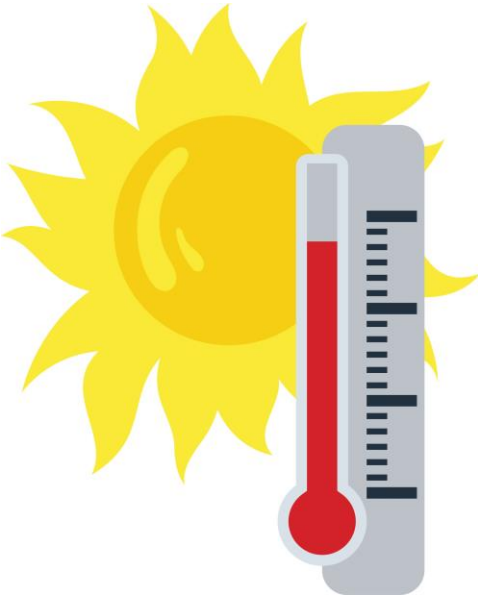
Juniata Valley Out of the Darkness Walk 2023 October 1, 2023

Registration 12:00 PM Let's Walk 1:00 PM

The three county (Huntingdon-Mifflin-Juniata) Community Walk will be held in unity at Kish Park - Lewistown, RAIN or SHINE! [AFSP-American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) [Download the flyer](#)

WE ALL HAVE OUR STRUGGLES. IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP.

Call or text 988 or text TALK to 741741. 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



Warm weather is here and in full swing. Exercising in hot and humid weather means that everyone needs to learn the signs of heat-related illnesses like heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke and how to prevent them. Read the tips below to keep safer from heat-related illnesses during this season.

Prevention-Stay safer in the heat by following these tips:

- Start slowly. Let yourself get used to higher temperatures and activity levels over the course of a few weeks.
- Drink plenty of water before and during exercise, even if you do not feel thirsty. Sports drinks can help replace electrolytes that are lost during exercise.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight, and loose-fitting clothing.
- If possible, avoid exercising or strenuous work during mid-day when the sun is at its peak.

Signs-Common signs of heat-related illness include:

- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Vomiting

Because these symptoms are very general, you need to pay attention and know what is normal for you or others, act quickly when you notice something is wrong.

Treatment

At the first signs of heat-related illness,

- Immediately stop exercising or working
- Move to a shady or air-conditioned spot
- Get cooled off with cold water, water-soaked towels, or a fan
- If feeling too nauseous, encourage a cold drink of water or a sports drink
- If you suspect heat stroke, call emergency medical services – 911 immediately for treatment

[Prevent Child Injury](#)

DeBE DEBORAH ERDMAN RN MSN CCRN TCRN INJURY PREVENTION COORDINATOR GEISINGER MEDICAL CENTER

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<p>ACT FAST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing • Sip cool water • Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve 	<p>ACT FAST</p> <p>CALL 911</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move person to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice
<p>Dizziness Thirst Heavy Sweating Nausea Weakness</p>	<p>Confusion Dizziness Becomes Unconscious</p>
<p><small>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</small></p>	<p><small>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</small></p>
<p>Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!</p>	



CALL 911 IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

**In an Emergency,
Act without delay!!**

Read the revised [Health Alert here](#).

live a colorful life.



Springtime Activity

for Children & Adults with Developmental Disabilities

TIE DYE BUTTERFLIES

These beautiful butterflies can be made using coffee filters or tissue paper.

[Our Favorite Spring Art Projects for Special Needs Adults](#)

Read more on [Spring activities](#).

YOU'RE INVITED TO TRAINING!

Check out the **NEW** online training calendar for virtual instructor-led training sessions available from the **Health Care Quality Unit**.

Our registered nurses provide free health-related training to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD), and to caregivers, service providers and county staff. [Click here](#).



***May 9th New Concepts in Aspiration Pneumonia- Dr. Paul Simonelli**

Contact Us

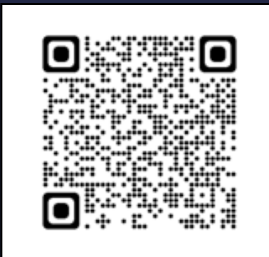
Central PA HCQU
29 Montour Street
Danville Pa 17822
M.C. 28-75

Cheryl Callahan, RN
Director
ccallahan@geisinger.edu

Patricia Brofee, RN
Training Coordinator
plbrofee@geisinger.edu

Kristy Campbell
Data Support Analyst
kacampbell@geisinger.edu

Our HCQU includes registered nurses with experience in serving individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism. Visit our website for their contact information and the counties they support.



[TAKE A FREE ONLINE COURSE](#)

Perfect Pita Pizza



This is an easy recipe for one personal-sized pizza — and fun for kids to join in making, too.

By Kimberly Adler-Morelli

Ingredients:

- 1 large whole grain pita bread
- ⅓ cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- ⅓ cup bottled pizza sauce or marinara sauce
- ¼ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- Favorite pizza toppings (e.g., sliced mushrooms, less-fat pepperoni, chopped green pepper, onion, pineapple chunks, lean ham)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450° F. Place pita on a baking sheet.
2. Spread ricotta cheese over the pita. Spoon pizza sauce over the cheese and add toppings.
3. Sprinkle mozzarella over the top and bake 6 to 8 minutes.

Adapted from *WEBMD.COM*. [Geisinger Wellness](#)

The Training Index has been replaced with [A Guide to Central PA HCQU Supports and Services](#). This guide outlines the valuable work the HCQU has to offer and how working with us makes a difference in the lives of the individuals you support. Trainings are not limited to topics highlighted in the guide. [2023 Referral Form](#)
