



Emma Ware & Food Ware-ness

Why Diet Foods Make You

FAT!

by Judi Burton

Ladies, put down that Splenda, don't reach for that low-calorie cookie, and for goodness sakes, do not drink another diet soda ever again! Not only will eating and drinking these things keep you from losing weight, artificial sweeteners and other ingredients found in diet foods, such as high levels of sodium, can be extremely dangerous.

On April 20, 2005, the FDA released a document specifying the side effects of diet foods and the main culprits associated with them. Among the side effects listed are headaches, dizziness, change of mood, vomiting, abdominal pain, oral sensory change, difficulty breathing and fatigue. The top five foods associated with these symptoms are diet sodas, tabletop sweeteners, diet gelatins, most pre-sweetened lemonade and pre-sweetened Kool Aid.

According to the University of Iowa, Department of Pediatrics and Biochemistry, "During absorption and metabolizing of aspartame, methanol is released. Ingestion of large quantities of methanol results in elevated blood methanol and formate concentrations and leads to a variety of adverse effects including metabolic acidosis and blindness."

Methanol is converted into formaldehyde in the small intestines. Formaldehyde is the familiar chemical component used in the process of embalming.

embalm- em·balm (m-bām) tr.v. em·balmed, em·balm·ing, em·balms.

1 : To treat (a corpse) with preservatives in order to prevent decay.

2 : To protect from change or oblivion; preserve or fix.

Ask yourself this: If I've been ingesting formaldehyde in small quantities since I was a kid, could it be preserving my fat, too? Emma Ware, nutritionist and local authority on weight loss, herbology and homeopathy in the Grand Strand, said, "Absolutely. It hardens your fat and makes it harder to break down." She also warned that aspartame is found in a surprising array of products, including Tylenol, children's cough syrup, and even antibiotics.

I sat down with Emma this month for a very informative chat about her weight-loss program. As soon as I walked in, it was evident that she had a lot of energy, but she was not hyped up like some infomercial host on weight-loss pills. She was simply excited about her nutritional weight-loss program and eager to discuss it. She walked me through her charts of foods titled "Good," "Not So Bad," "Not So Good" and "Bad." Then she showed me a glass vial the size of



two rolls of quarters, filled with sugar. "This is how much sugar is in a 12 ounce can of soda," Emma exclaimed. My jaw dropped. Seeing it like that, in granulated form, not dissolved into a can of soda, was shocking.

We moved on to the sodium chart. She explained that just about every diet food out on the market has more sodium in it than non-diet foods. "It's a flavor-enhancing technique.

We're told to look at calories, fat grams and carbs on the backs of labels, but when has anyone told you instead to look at the sodium?" It's so easily pushed to the side of our diet-crazy focus that we fail to realize sodium is one of the primary components in weight gain.

So, how do you eat regular foods without gaining weight? Her answer is astonishingly simple: "Eat fresh foods in small portions all of the time." Flavor has a calming effect on humans, and we refer to many favorite dishes as "comfort food." If you're one of those people who love to "dip," use salad dressings that you've watered down. Also, try drinking fresh organic juice diluted with water or organic club soda.

What if I have a crazy schedule and I just can't cook all of the time? "The same way you are organized with your career, you can organize your health," said Emma. She advised taking one day to make four different meals. "Package them in small containers and add fruits and raw foods for snacks. Bring a cooler to work."

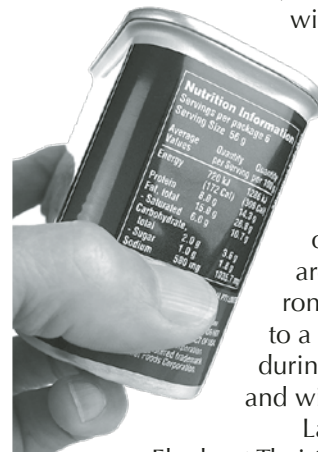
What to use for sweeteners? If aspartame is bad, are the ever-changing array of artificial sweeteners, and even processed stevia, also bad? "Yes," answered Emma. "They are all the same kind of manufactured product in different-colored packages. If it doesn't have the USDA Organic label on it, it's as bad as all the rest." Emma suggested organic raw sugar, brown sugar, real maple syrup, honey and agave nectar. "If used sparingly," she said with emphasis, "it will be metabolized without causing a build up of fat."

What about dining in restaurants? Here on the Strand, the typical fare is battered, breaded, fried and smothered in salt. Emma had an answer for that, too: Dine at restau-

rants that offer fresh-to-order meals. She recommended her favorite three nearby in the Murrells Inlet area. I visited each to ask them why Emma would say they were healthier than most.

As I walked into Consalvi's in Murrells Inlet, my nostrils were overwhelmed with the smell of fresh baked bread, tomatoes and basil. It took me back to my childhood, and the kitchen of my best friend's grandmother. I half expected her to walk out any moment and pinch my cheeks pleading *manja*, which means "eat" in Italian. I approached the owner, Lisa Consalvi, and told her Emma had recommended them. She chuckled and said with bravado, "Of course, because we're Italian." I had to laugh.

My next stop was Perrone's in Pawleys Island. The walls were covered with the work of local artists, and the glass deli case was filled with scrumptious salads. I sat down and enjoyed the Thai Shrimp Wrap. The shrimp was boiled, not fried; they were humongous and served with a bit of mayonnaise. It was



perfectly seasoned and tasted like it was fresh caught that morning. I had a chance to talk with owner Eileen Perrone who proudly stated that all of their food is "made fresh daily to order, and many of their recipes are gluten free or vegetarian." Perrone's is relocating across the street to a new bigger and better location during the beginning of September, and will reopen mid-month.

Lastly, I headed over to the Blue Elephant Thai Cuisine in Murrells Inlet where I had a chat with Dr. Paul Byington, who is not only a master chef, but a master of feng shui. When I asked his secret, he pointed to a sign on the wall that said: "We prepare each dish as ordered—providing the freshest Thai cuisine in the heart of Murrells Inlet. Be patient, our chef is at work on your masterpiece. Thank you and enjoy." The sign should read, "Expect to be here for at least two hours, because it is all made to order and we truly care about our food." Trust me, it's worth the wait. Just a hint: Even if you like hot spices, order mild. It's all quite wonderful, but much more spicy hot than you'd expect. Servings are generous and you'll have plenty to take home.

A pattern was forming in all three locations: fresh whole foods without processing. These restaurants only served freshly prepared dishes; they didn't even slice into a tomato until someone ordered one.

"I love to eat, love it!" exclaimed Emma. So do I, Emma, and I want to eat like you!

Emma Ware is accepting new weight-loss clients, and in September, begins teaching cooking classes at the Renaissance Bistro at 207 Chartwell Ct, Myrtle Beach (behind the BB&T Bank west of the Hwy 17 Bypass). Classes are \$35 each and include portion control, shortcuts to natural flavor, preparing raw foods recipes, cooking chemical free, and how to make your own fresh almond milk.

Emma Ware's Top 3 Restaurant Choices near Murrells Inlet:

- **Consalvi's Italian Market**, Murrells Inlet
- **Perrone's Fine Food and Wine Market**, Pawleys Island
- **Blue Elephant Thai Cuisine**, Murrells Inlet

Do you have a favorite restaurant that cooks fresh to order from whole foods? Send us your suggestions for Emma.