



## HEALTH MINISTRY

### A New You

Wouldn't it be nice to trade ourselves in on a new, better model like we do with cars. It is January of a new year and the resolutions made usually last at least a couple of months. We, as a congregation, have been doing a good job with exercise programs, healthier diets, health screenings and preventive medicine. We can't prevent aging yet, but we can age healthier and stronger with a few tweaks here and there.

One of the best gifts that we can give ourselves right now is to cut back on consumption of sugar and high fructose corn syrup. We can use less sugar in our tea and coffee, in our cake and cookie recipes, in all our foods. Be careful, sugar is hiding in many foods, i.e., low fat salad dressings. Read your package labels. This doesn't mean we can't eat these foods, but we can find better ways to make these foods or substitute brands, or consume less. The more natural whole foods you eat the less sugar and salt you will ingest. The food industry has increased sugar and salt amounts in processed foods over the years to keep us addicted and coming back to their products. We have become accustomed to the taste of sweet, salty foods. This is one of the promoters of chronic illness and obesity. We can spend hours at the gym, but unless we address the sugar and salt often hidden in our foods, we will not improve our health.

Sugar and high fructose corn syrup are metabolized by our livers. Consuming too much creates more work for the liver. If it is converted fast in sufficient quantity such as in drinking soda or fruit juice, the liver will convert much of it to fat. That is one reason our triglycerides level on our lab tests are elevated – too much sugar consumption. Over a period of chronic use, this can also induce insulin resistance, which can cause obesity, type 2 diabetes, and might be an underlying defect in some cancers. Insulin resistance or metabolic syndrome is a condition that develops as a result of the stress on the pancreas from having produced increased amounts of insulin. It does this to keep up with the demand from ingesting too many sugars and carbs to keep blood sugar in balance. The body calls for more and more insulin thus stressing out the pancreas and causing chronically elevated insulin, risking diabetes and heart disease. It is believed increase insulin secretion promotes tumor growth.

If you think back in history, the Native Americans – hunter – gatherers, used honey from bee hives, fruit from gathering and sap from trees (boiled to become maple syrup) as sweeteners. We can learn a lot from this practice.

So what can we do? We can read the labels on food and drinks we buy. We can use agavé, honey, maple syrup and fruit as sweeteners. Stevia (Truvia) is a natural sweetener made from stevia plants. Read labels. 4 grams of sugar equals 1 teaspoon. A can of Pepsi has 41 grams of sugar or 10 teaspoons. Would you sit there and eat 10 teaspoons of sugar? Tropicana orange juice has 22 grams of sugar per 8 oz. glass or 5 ½ teaspoons of sugar. A whole orange (medium) has much less sugar than a glass of orange juice. It would be better to buy unsweetened beverages and juice and add your own small amount of sweetener. Read your labels and you decide what you want to feed your loved ones.

Have a happy and healthy New Year!

Blessings,  
Bonnie Biskup, Parish Nurse  
Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church  
January 2020

American Diabetic Association  
Dr. Robert Lusteg, M.D.  
Gary Lubes – Sweet and Vicious