

[IMAGE]

## Surviving Jelly Bean Day

By Editorial Staff

Yes, it's almost upon us: National Jelly Bean Day (April 22). It's your day to explore the sugary wonder of the jelly bean, thought to have been invented by confectioner William Schrafft at the time of the American Civil War. The problem is, for too many people, the "jelly bean" (sugar) is an everyday dietary staple, not the occasional treat it should be.

How do you ensure Jelly Bean Day doesn't last beyond April 22? It's all about moderation, whether sugar, processed foods, saturated fat or anything else. Here are some simple strategies to help you indulge your sweet tooth without feeling guilty – and without becoming a sugar addict:

*Keep It at Arm's Length (or Farther):* The No. 1 way to minimize your sugar intake: Don't surround yourself with it! Temptation is tough to manage, even for the most diligent of dieters. Start by assessing your pantry, refrigerator and freezer for sugar sources – is your kitchen tempting you with sugar at every turn? If so, it's time to change your shopping habits. And what about location? Are you putting sugary items front and center? Research suggests people are more likely to eat what they see first. So put healthy items at eye level and keep your treats at arm's length for special occasions.

*Think Natural, Not Added:* If you're going to consume sugar, try to get it primarily from natural sources, such as fresh fruit. That way, you get the myriad vitamins, minerals and fiber along with the natural sugar, and may satisfy your sweet tooth without having to turn to foods heaped with added sugar, such as bakery items.

jelly bean - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark *Fill Up on the Good Stuff:* Overeating, which often includes eating unhealthy foods, can happen when you don't eat enough of the healthy variety. That's because processed foods and "empty-calorie" snacks don't really fill you up – at least not for long. They either contain sugar or turn quickly into sugar, which burns quickly, leaving you wanting something more. So eat plenty of whole grains, vegetables and lean protein, and you'll find yourself satisfied, not craving.

*Adopt the One & Done Rule:* There's nothing wrong with the occasional treat now and then, and letting yourself enjoy your favorite sugary foods is part of a moderate eating plan. Avoid sweets for too long and

you'll be more likely to "snap" and down an entire box of cookies when you're having a bad day. So feel free to treat yourself – to one of your favorite desserts on occasion, in a reasonable portion. One cookie, OK; 10 cookies, not so much.

Can't eliminate sugar from your diet? Don't fret – you don't have to. Just consume it in moderation, prioritize natural sugar sources, and focus on nourishing your body and brain with low-sugar (or no-sugar) foods. You'll be amazed at how you'll feel – and you'll be reducing your risk of diabetes, obesity and their health consequences in the process. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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