

Vermont Family Finds Healthier Habits in 'Year Without Sugar'

Could you give up sugar for a year? One Vermont family did just that and is now talking about the benefits of a sugar-free life.

Fox News reports that freelance writer Eve Schaub was inspired to have her family go sugar-free after watching a video by Dr. Robert Lustig, author of "The Skinny on Obesity," detailing the dangers of fructose (fruit sugar) on the body.

"This was like all of a sudden someone had pulled back the curtain and I was seeing things in a way I'd never seen before," Schaub, of Pawlet, Vermont, told . "Everywhere you go there's food ... and everywhere there's food, there's sugar. I wanted to do something that wouldn't just impact our family, but others as well."

In 2011, Schaub, her husband Stephen and daughters Greta and Ilsa, ages 11 and 6 at the time, embarked on a year of sugar-free eating. Schaub blogged about the family's experience and now has a newly published book, "The Year of No Sugar."

The family focused primarily on eliminating fructose from the diet. Schaub noted when the body processes fructose, the liver produces uric acid and fatty acids. Too much of these byproducts can lead to gout, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

But whole fruits, on the other hand, contain fiber and micronutrients that boost health.

"That's really the best way to have fructose, in its original container ... the way nature meant to have it," Schaub said.

She said the biggest grocery challenges for the family were finding replacements for fruit juice and bread. After a couple weeks on the new diet, the family adapted to the new diet and cravings for sugary foods lessened.

The take-home lesson, Schaub said, is that it's important to read every ingredient, question foods people tell you are "healthy," and avoid drinking sugar. "Then you can make their own choices but have the information you need," she said.

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