

July is National Ice Cream Month!

By

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July is National Ice Cream Month and just naturally follows National Dairy Month in June. I love ice cream so much I purchased an electric ice cream maker, so all I have to do is plug it in after I have added the ingredients and walk away from it while it does all the work! Regardless of whether you make your own or buy it at the grocery store, ice cream is everyone's favorite summer treat for snacks or desserts. So reading labels is very important when you choose ice cream to avoid going over your fat and calorie budget. Ice cream is made with dairy products which naturally contain animal fat because they originate from dairy cows. Here are three tips to help you enjoy your favorite treat without the guilt:

- 1) Choose fat-free ice cream or frozen yogurt over regular ice cream and save 100 calories per ½ cup.
- 2) Light ice creams have about half the fat as their regular counterparts.
- 3) Go easy on toppings or see the suggestions below for fresh fruit combinations. Toppings can add a significant amount of calories to ice cream. Two tablespoons of most toppings contain around 100 calories.

Fresh fruit is always your best bet for a delicious, healthy ice cream topping. You may pick from the following:

- Fresh strawberries
- Peaches mixed with fresh raspberries
- Kiwi and mango slices
- Fresh cherries
- Blueberries and blackberries
- Sliced apricots

Here are some ice cream label terms to help you as you make the healthiest selections of ice cream:

- Low-fat: 3 grams or less fat per serving
- Light: 50% less fat than the brand's regular ice cream
- Ice Milk: Can mean low-fat or light
- Nonfat: Less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving
- No sugar added: Neither ice cream nor add-ins can be sweetened with sugar; can use artificial sweeteners. This does not mean sugar free or calorie free.

Hopefully, this information will help you make the healthiest possible choice of your favorite ice cream. Go ahead and enjoy this delicious dessert or snack that is cool and refreshing during these hot summer months! Call the Hardee County Extension Service at 863-773-2164 for more information on how to eat healthy all year long.