

## Many parlors dedicated to lower-fat

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Many local ice cream parlors -- from Moo's in Indialantic to Bruster's in Titusville -- provide healthier alternatives to the traditional delicious, but fat-laden, creamy stuff.

According to the International Dairy Foods Association, a large chunk of consumers desire healthier, low-fat ice cream products, with 27.8 percent of the market going for reduced-fat, light, low-fat and nonfat ice creams.

But, because the enjoyment of ice cream depends in large part on the experience, many consumers still crave the indulgence of super-premium, with its comparatively high fat content and top-quality ingredients.

"I think, if people had a choice, they would choose super-premium," said Matt Solomon, who nevertheless keeps a good selection of low-fat flavors in his Melbourne Ben & Jerry's outlet.

For family-run operations like Twisty Cone in Palm Bay, co-branding or partnering with well-known products for increased product awareness can gain them an edge on customers.

Using a "Crunchi Creme" machine she recently bought, Twisty Cone owner Michelle Tharp can tap onto the consumer recognition of candy like Butterfinger, Heath Bars, M&M's and Oreo, which are infused directly into the soft serve by the \$20,000 contraption.

The International Dairy Foods Association expects this trend to continue.

But, despite the outrageous flavor options and the clever marketing schemes of competitors, some mom-and-pop shops do fine just selling the basic stuff -- one cone or dish at a time.

"Eighty percent of the people that come here buy some type of vanilla ice cream," Moo's co-owner Rick Dollard said. "The average person that comes to Moo's spends \$2."