



Are You a Sugar Addict?

Sugar has an amazing appeal for just about everyone. Sweet foods are pleasant to the taste. When children are presented with sweet treats their faces usually light up. It even appears to calm children down, at least temporarily, which is why hospitals give glucose water to babies. Sugar is associated with fun and happiness, which is why sugary foods are served on birthdays, holidays and celebrations.

Sugar is also associated with love. Couples often address their spouse with titles like sweetie, sweetheart, honey and even sugar. And obedient, happy children are sweet.

Sugar is added to many foods. Many beverages are loaded with it from soda and energy drinks to coffee drinks, sweetened teas and fruit juice drinks. Other foods that have a lot of added sugar include canned fruit, bread, pasta sauces, ketchup, BBQ sauce, salad dressings, energy bars and flavored yogurt.

How Much is Too Much?

In general sugar consumption is largely condoned. The main condemnation of sugar is that “too much” is bad for you. Most people recognize this, but how much is too much? And even if you know you should cut back on sugar, why is it so hard to do?

The answer is simple; sugar is highly addictive. If you don't believe sugar is addictive, try this simple test, don't eat anything with refined sugar in it for two weeks. Even better, if you have children, don't let them have any sugar for just a few days. In either case, you'll rapidly see all the classic symptoms of withdrawal.

Sugar stimulates the reward centers in the brain, causing a release of dopamine. Dopamine neurons motivate and reward you for pursuing worthwhile goals in life. This part of the brain is also stimulated by drugs like nicotine, cocaine and amphetamines. When sugar is consumed regularly this dopamine response that feels so pleasurable becomes blunted, causing cravings for more sugar.

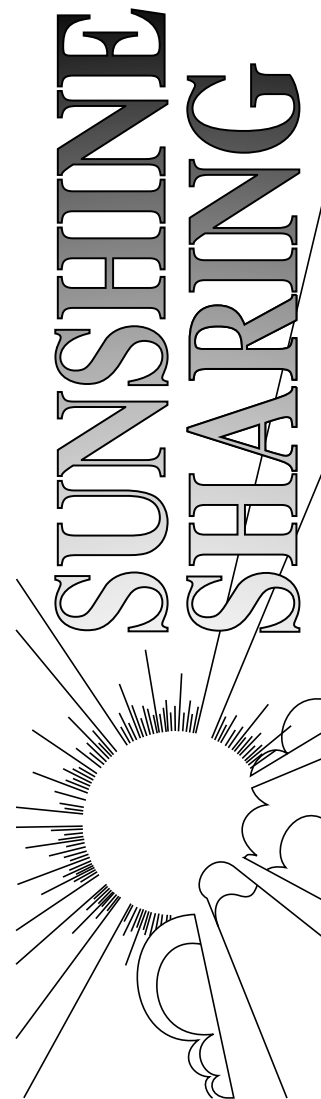
This is why it's so difficult to determine how much sugar is OK to consume. Once you're addicted, it's difficult to cut back because you don't feel good when you do. Just like one drink is too much alcohol for an alcoholic, even a little bit of sugar can be a problem if you're a sugarholic.

Understanding Sugar Addiction

After giving us an initial surge of pleasure, sugar acts as a stimulant. It gives a temporary boost of energy due to the release of dopamine. This is why sugar is usually considered an energy booster. Sugar is often combined with other stimulants to increase their effects, particularly caffeine in tea, coffee and sodas, but it is also used to make flavored alcoholic beverages and is even added to cigarettes. In fact, the addition of sugar to tobacco not only increased tobacco sales, it appears to have made cigarettes more addictive.

Like other stimulants, sugar has a down side. The temporary pleasure and stimulus sugar provides gives way to irritability, anxiety, fatigue and even mild depression, a short time later, requiring another fix in order to feel good again. A child placated with sweets often becomes

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Your guide to better health the natural way.

Important Notice

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hyperactive and irritable within less than an hour. They are anything but calm and happy. A similar thing happens to adults, but it is harder to see as adults are better at controlling their emotional expression.

Are All Sugars Equally Harmful?

Most mainstream literature on sugar lumps all forms of sugar together. They claim that all sugars from those found in sweet fruits to natural sweeteners like honey and maple syrup as being on par with refined sugars like table sugar (sucrose) and high fructose corn syrup. This is a deliberate attempt to obscure the facts because not all sugars are bad for you. There is nothing wrong with eating naturally sweet *foods*. It is sugar in its *chemical form* that's both addictive and damaging to the body.

Your taste buds like sweet things because your brain, nerves and muscles use sugar for energy. Specifically they use a sugar called glucose. Sucrose and high fructose corn syrup are composed of two sugars, glucose and fructose. Plants store sucrose as starch, so all starchy foods, including grains and potatoes are sources of sugar.

Natural Foods versus Refined Foods

Nature, however, does not provide sugar in isolation. In natural foods, sugar is found in the cellular structure of the plants, along with numerous other substances including fiber, vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats and various phytochemicals. These additional vitamins and minerals are required to process this sugar into usable energy.

In a survival situation, if you found some fruits, berries, honey or even a starchy food like potatoes that contains a lot of sugar, your dopamine neurons would fire off motivating you to expend the effort to gather more. When you ate it, your body would get not only the sugar in these foods, it would also get the other nutrients it needed at the same time. This would produce a feeling of satisfaction so you would stop eating.

Refined sugars, on the other hand, are pure sucrose. They have no other nutritional value. The same neurons fire off in your brain when you taste them, but when you eat them, they don't provide that feeling of satisfaction because they don't contain the nutrients your body needs. And thus, there is a tendency to eat more sugar to fill this void.

Natural Sources of Sugar Are Good for Us

In addition to vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, fruits and vegetables contain other beneficial sugars such as xylose, fucose and manose. These sugars combine with proteins to form cell membranes and assist cellular communication, which improves immunity and cellular function.

Natural foods can help you avoid eating too much. To confirm this idea, try the following experiment. Cut up some pieces of apple, banana or orange and start eating them. No matter how

sweet and tasty these fruits are you'll find you reach a point where you lose the desire to eat more of them, even though your stomach may not physically be full. Your body will simply tell you, I've had enough!

Now, try this same experiment with any food you like that is loaded with refined sugars, such as soda, candy, cookies or ice cream. Notice that the same mechanisms don't kick in. Most people can continue to nibble or sip these foods and beverages indefinitely. In fact, you might find yourself making room for desert even after your stomach feels full from a good meal.

This illustrates that the tendency to overconsume sugar isn't necessarily a lack of willpower. It's due to the fact that your brain isn't sending you the stop eating signals. You're reacting to the sugar like an addict does to a drug or an alcoholic does to alcohol.

Why Quit?

An alcoholic isn't going to quit drinking and a smoker isn't going to quit smoking until they see a reason to do so. And no one will quit a sugar habit until they recognize the benefits of doing so.



You've probably heard about the negative effects of refined carbohydrates all too often. Instead, let's look at the positive side and talk about the *benefits* you might enjoy when you have kicked the sugar habit.

The first is weight loss. People who don't eat refined carbs (and temporally avoid high starchy natural foods) tend to lose weight and keep it off. At the same time, their energy levels are higher and more stable. They also sleep better.

People who give up sugar also report greater immunity to disease. In fact, many people stop catching colds and flu completely. People with autoimmune conditions also notice better immune function. Digestion often improves, too, probably because avoiding refined carbohydrates improves the balance of gut microflora.

People who give up sugar notice that their emotions are more stable (and positive) and their brain works better. They stop experiencing mood swings. If they suffered from depression or anxiety, this often clears up completely. They may also find it easier to control their temper. They can also think more clearly and remember things better.

Other benefits vary, but people have also seen their high blood pressure come down, skin conditions clear up, migraine headaches go away, and muscle and joint pain diminish. Hormone levels typically become more balanced, which helps with PMS, erectile dysfunction and improved sexual drive and performance.

All of the above benefits come with a reduction in your risk of all major degenerative diseases, including heart disease, cancer, neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and neuropathy and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. In short, eliminating refined sugars will probably grant you a longer and a healthier life. So, what are you waiting for? Get started today in kicking the sugar habit.

Kicking the Sugar Habit



Overcoming the habit of eating refined sugar may be difficult at first. In fact, for some people it sounds impossible. It's like taking all the fun out of life. But, believe it or not,

you'll feel so good that you really won't miss it that much once you get past the initial withdrawal. In fact, the social addiction to sweets is harder to overcome than the physical addiction.

The easiest way to kick the sugar habit isn't to give up sweets entirely. It is to substitute refined sugars, high fructose corn syrup and white flour for something healthier. The most natural way to satisfy your cravings for sweets is with fresh fruits. Eat whole fruits, not fruit juices. If you need to sweeten something, use raw honey, real maple syrup (grade B) or molasses. These sweeteners have some vitamin and mineral content, which means they create greater satisfaction than refined sugar, so you are likely to eat less.

Still Crave Something Sweet? Try Xylitol

If you need a sweetener that doesn't add flavor, try **Xylitol**, which has about the same sweetness as table sugar, so you can substitute it for sugar in beverages and recipes in equal amounts. Derived from corn stalks or birch bark, it has 40% fewer calories than sugar. And, because it does not trigger insulin production, xylitol helps to balance blood sugar levels and control carbohydrate cravings, while helping to satisfy any cravings for something sweet.

In addition to using xylitol as a sugar replacement, you can also chew **xylitol gum** or suck on **xylitol mints** when you crave something sweet. There are added health benefits to this because xylitol helps reduce cavities and prevent gum disease because the bacteria which cause dental problems can't live on xylitol. It also inhibits unfriendly bacteria in the gut, as well as the bacteria that cause ear infections and sinus problems.

Less Starch, More Fat and Protein

Since all starches are converted to sugars, it's important to avoid all refined starches, such as white flour and white rice, too. If you want to lose weight, try cutting back on grains and starchy vegetables like potatoes in favor of less starchy vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, squash, carrots, and green beans.

What you want is to eat more protein and good fats. Good natural fats include organic butter and cream, coconut oil, extra virgin olive oil, avocados and nuts, not artificial fats like processed

Additional Help and Information

For more information and assistance in overcoming the addiction to sugar, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

The Case Against Sugar by Gary Taubes

Sugar Shock! How Sweets and Simple Carbs Can Derail Your Life by Connie Bennett with Stephen T. Sinatra, MD

Sweet Death: The Epidemic that's Killing America by Hugo Rodier, MD

Sugar Toxic: The Dirty Fuel that Impairs Brain Function and Makes Us Fat by Margit Silverman

vegetable oils, margarine and shortening. Eggs and meat are also good for you if they come from grass-fed or pasture-raised animals.

Unfortunately, many people are still laboring under the false assumption that fats and cholesterol clog the arteries and cause heart disease. Researchers now know that the natural fats do not do this, but excess sugar does!

The truth is that good fats help to satiate the appetite, balance blood sugar levels and help reduce sugar consumption, so don't be afraid of them. In fact, taking a good **omega-3 essential fatty acid** supplement and the fat soluble **vitamins A, D3 and K-2** will actually benefit your cardiovascular system and help you overcome any sugar addiction.

Instead of starting the day with cereal, pastries, sugar sweetened coffee or other sources of sugar and carbs, try making a protein smoothie. You can use **Whey, Soy or Pea Protein Powders** and even add a little fresh or frozen fruit (berries or bananas are good).

A Little Known Cause of Sugar Cravings

Fruits and vegetables contain fibers, which feed friendly gut bacteria. Refined carbohydrates and table sugar, on the other hand, encourage the growth of harmful yeast and bacteria in the intestines. These unfriendly microbes not only adversely affect immune function and overall health, they send signals to your brain causing you to crave more sugar.



If you reduce the amount of unfriendly gut flora and increase the healthy gut flora, you'll crave less sugar and refined foods and desire more natural foods instead. Some supplements that can help rebalance your gut microbes include **berberine** (and herbs containing it like **goldenseal**) and an **Anti-Fungal Formula** that contains ingredients like caprylic acid, **pau d'arco** and oregano.

It is also helpful to take a **Probiotic Supplement** along with a **Fiber Supplement** containing natural fibers like psyllium, apple pectin and oat bran to encourage the growth of friendly bacteria in the intestines. As the balance of bacteria shifts in your gut, you'll find yourself naturally desiring healthier food.

Supplements to Control Sugar Cravings

If you have rapid mood swings and feel shaky and irritable when you haven't eaten in a few hours, you probably have hypoglycemia, a rebound effect from excess sugar consumption. The low levels of sugar in your blood will cause you to crave sweets and simple carbohydrates like pastries and white bread.

Taking supplements that help to balance and stabilize your blood sugar levels will help you get rid of these cravings. One way is to take two capsules of **licorice root** or one capsule of **concentrated licorice** and two capsules of an **Algae Formula** (containing spirulina, blue-green algae and chlorella) at breakfast and again at lunch. If you experience an energy slump in the afternoon take them again.

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Having Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome Isn't Sweet

Before the introduction of refined grains and later refined sugars, diabetes was virtually unknown. As soon as refined sugar and white flour are introduced into a group of people, rates of obesity and diabetes skyrocket. If that's not bad enough, sugar consumption is linked to numerous other health problems.

Most people know that too much sugar is bad for them, but how much is "too much?" In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, you'll discover that the issue isn't how much sugar you consume, but the source of those sugars. Natural sugars found in whole foods aren't the problem; it's the refined sugars like sucrose and high fructose corn syrup that are wrecking havoc with your health. These refined carbohydrates are highly addictive, too, which is why it's difficult to control how much of them you eat. Learn how to break the sugar habit with a better diet, herbs and nutritional supplements and start feeling better.

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If you have high blood pressure, replace the licorice root with two capsules of **Eleuthera root** or one capsule of **Korean ginseng**. Another option is to take two capsules of spirulina and two capsules of bee pollen. You can also take an **Appetite Control formula** containing garcinia and chromium to control sugar cravings. This type of formula will contain prebiotics, food for friendly bacteria, that will also help to balance gut flora and further reduce cravings.

Helps for Metabolic Syndrome and Diabetes

If you've already developed metabolic syndrome or diabetes, you'll need some additional support for overcoming cellular resistance to insulin and stabilizing blood sugar levels. If you experience frequent thirst and urination, a sense of dryness in your body, hot flashes, night sweats, and burning sensations in your hands and feet, try a **Chinese Yin-Increasing formula** containing the

key herbs eucommia, glehnia, rehmannia and ophiopogon. These herbs will help to balance blood sugar, reduce insulin resistance and help your cells to hydrate better.

A **Blood Sugar Balancing Formula** will be useful if you've been diagnosed with metabolic syndrome or diabetes. Key herbs to look for in these formulas include: cinnamon, fenugreek, bitter melon, gymnema, nopal and banaba. The minerals **chromium**, vanadium, **zinc** and **magnesium** are also helpful in regulating blood sugar levels. Many people who crave sugar are also deficient in minerals, particularly GTF chromium and magnesium.

You can do it. With some simple changes in your diet and the help of some herbs and supplements you can break the sugar habit and enjoy the improved health that comes from a diet free of refined carbohydrates.