

Sugar and the Body

We aren't born craving sugar. Our baby bodies only know when they are hungry. It's up to the caretaker to feed baby what baby's body needs.

Later, usually still as a baby, we are exposed to sugar. Mmmmm. It's sweet and tasty. Then, it becomes a mission. We want that sweet taste again.

I have learned from experience that sugar cravings are taught. If you stay away from sugar, it becomes easier and easier to not think about sugar. If you cave in and eat sugar every time you think about it, you train your body to crave it often.

When your body becomes accustomed to sugar or high carbohydrate intake, you have simply trained your body to crave it. Sometimes the cravings are so often and intense, that it seems the body is failing us.

The good news? You can un-train your body too. Understanding why your body is craving those pesky (yet delicious) sweets, can help you to respond in a more healthy way.

Fatigue

When you are tired, you may have trained your body to crave sweets for the short but quick pick-me-up. This seems to happen when you haven't eaten for a while, or when you don't eat enough in general or when you just keep eating those foods that cause short bursts of energy. To remedy these cravings, try to snack between meals instead of just meal time. And eat foods with complex carbs, protein and fiber. This will provide longer lasting energy, and those cravings will diminish.

Women and Hormones

A craving for sweets seems overwhelming for you if, as a woman, you have PMS. These cravings can be from hormonal imbalances which are normal fluctuations that accompany the menstrual cycle. To put these cravings to bed, eat small healthy meals throughout the day, and get plenty of rest. If you get enough sleep, that in itself can curb many cravings.

Genetics

New research has shown you may be genetically more likely to have sugar and food addictions. Many studies show some people can be biologically addicted to sugar in the same way as some are addicted to heroin or nicotine. You can overcome this biological addiction to sugar by keeping your blood sugar balanced. Eat a nutritious breakfast with some protein like eggs, shakes or nut butters. Also, eat every 3-4 hours including protein with each snack or meal. (Lean meat, nuts, seeds or beans).

Emotions

Certain emotions can send you to the fridge for that tub of ice cream. Just watch the movies of the broken-hearted girl or woman, and off she goes. Just those movies alone can be enough to send you to the sugar shelf! You may have an emotional connection with sugar. It satisfies! For a minute... When you understand this emotional connection, you can choose to curb or ignore the cravings. Instead, try to get in touch with those emotions. If you go to a psychiatrist or psychologist for help, their job is to get you to face those emotions head on to promote healing. If you hide behind the candy bar, it just seems to make you feel worse, not better. If those cravings are too powerful, eat a sweet piece of fruit like an orange or apple.

Flavor

Honestly! It's the sweet goodness that drives us all to eat sugar. It's delicious! Occasionally indulging is not going to cause harm. In fact, it can help you stick to healthy eating. If you tell yourself you will NEVER eat this again, you set yourself up for failure. In fact, it is better to tell yourself to enjoy the ice cream... Sunday. Or you pick the day of the week. It will give you something to look forward to, and can even give you such a rewarding sense of accomplishment. You made it 7 whole days without eating straight sugar! Then, don't watch TV, don't get locked into a serious conversation with anyone, just enjoy every bite. Pay attention to it, and it only. If you get distracted, you will eat mindlessly, then the you will just want more.

Some people find that going cold turkey works very well. After a few days their sugar cravings diminish. Other people still have cravings but have trained their taste buds to be satisfied with much less.

Remember to choose quality over quantity. If you have a craving that won't let up, eat your sugar. Make sure it is a delicious piece of your favorite piece of chocolate, pie or cake or decadent ice cream, and just make it a small amount, and really enjoy every tiny bite.

AVOID

Even though this article is about sugar and the body, and this is information to help you break free from the addiction to sugar, I can't help but warn against the harmful effects of the sugar alternative. It is better to eat real sugar, than the alternative. I tell everyone in my program that I view artificial sweeteners as a toxic substance. The list of side effects are vast, but the more common ones are: headaches, mood swings, abdominal pain, cramps, fatigue, memory loss, and weakness. But studies show that the biggest side effect of all is these harmful chemicals cause weight gain. That's right. The opposite of the very thing they purport to be the answer to. Why do artificial sweeteners cause weight gain? The theory is that when you eat artificial sugars, the body reacts as if it is real sugar, or glucose. This stimulates the release of insulin. The body then tries to utilize sugar that is not there, so hunger is stimulated. This in turn may cause your body's metabolism to slow down. A healthy plan includes avoiding all foods and drinks that include artificial sweeteners. Even Splenda. Even though Splenda is marketed as being natural, its sugar molecule base is the only part you could call natural. Since chlorine

is attached to it, researchers claim it has more in common with pesticides than sugar. Artificial sweeteners may actually play a role in exacerbating the conditions they are meant to aid. Instead of artificial sweeteners, try a splash of fruit juice to water, or add lemon or cucumber slices to water for a refreshing drink. Use real sugar or fruit in desserts for a healthy alternative.

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