



WHAT IS IT ABOUT SUGAR?

A brief overview on sugars, carbs, glycemic index, good vs. bad carbs

Sugars

Sugars end in -ose, -glucose, fructose, sucrose, lactose, etc. Those that occur in unrefined whole foods are considered healthy and beneficial.

- They supply energy and fuel our bodies' physiology. Added, refined, concentrated, artificial sugars and sweeteners are not healthy.
- Natural sugars are those that occur in whole foods and are in many healthy foods such as broccoli. These sugars include naturally occurring sugar alcohols.
- Some concentrated natural sugars can play a part in a healthy diet such as maple syrup or molasses but in limited quantities.
- Human beings are naturally attracted to sweet flavor. Breast milk is very sweet.
- Added sugars, refined and artificial sugars are not healthy in any quantity. It doesn't mean we cannot have a "treat" occasionally, but not as a regular component of our diet.
- Human beings have always loved to feast or treat themselves. We used to be able to do this a few times per year, now we can do it a few times each day!

Sugar Consumption

- Paleo peoples ate about 20 tsp natural sugars in a year; we now average between 120-150 # of refined sugar per year. That is 22-40 tsp per day! American children average more than adults.
- About half of this is high fructose corn syrup. The good news is that HFCS ingestion has decreased in recent years. The bad news is that it has been replaced by sucrose- table sugar.
- We drink over 60 gallons of soft drinks in a year- that is per person!
- This equals about 25% of our daily calories. Add refined carb intake and that is about 50% of our daily fuel that is empty of nutrients.
- The American heart Association recommends no more than 6 tsp of added sugar per day for females and no more than 9 tsp for males.
- Sugar causes inflammation, hormonal dysregulation, predisposes to many chronic diseases- cancer, CV disease, and diabetes.
- It depresses the immune system's defensive systems for 2-15 hours after ingestion. Too much sugar can result in hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia.

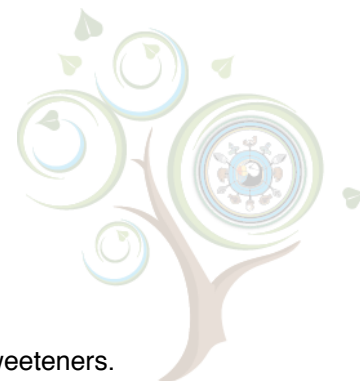
Artificial sweeteners - these are made from artificial ingredients and chemically altered. Some people experience side effects. Studies show that consumption of these leads to more, not less, cravings for sweets and calories.

Stevia - is probably the safest and most healthy alternative sweetener. Not all stevia products are the same; some have additives. Truvia is a combination of stevia and sugar alcohol.

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Sugar alcohols- these do occur naturally in foods, but are also used as low calorie sweeteners. There are side effects, primarily digestive.

Glycemic index and glycemic load-

- GI is how quickly a food raises the blood sugar. The higher the number, the higher the blood response.
- Not all of these foods taste sweet. White potatoes have a high GI.
- High GI signals the body to produce large amounts of insulin, which carries the BS into cells to be stored for later use. We then get a rapid drop in BS that can lead to hypoglycemia.
- GL takes the amount of carbs in a typical serving into account along with the GI and therefore gives a more realistic view of what we eat.
- Fiber, eating some fat or protein with any carb will slow this process.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the starches, fiber and natural sugars in foods.

- Carbs are in all plant foods and some animal foods, mostly dairy products.
- There are no carbs in fats or protein, but are everywhere else- fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans & legumes, herbs, spices.
- Fiber can be soluble (forms a gel or mucilage) or insoluble such as bran. Both play an essential role in health and may be partially digested or be undigested.

Which are good carbs- or slow carbs?

- Those in whole foods, all of those listed above.
- They are unrefined and therefore contain vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients.
- Plant carbs contain all of the B vitamins except B 12 (animal foods have B 12), and all of the minerals we need as long as the soil in which they were grown contained sufficient minerals.
- They contain building blocks of all of our hormones and neurotransmitters and boost levels of our feel-good neurotransmitter- serotonin.
- They contain phytonutrients that are known to help prevent chronic diseases and if you already have one, to slow it down or even reverse the course. Examples are curcumin in turmeric, lycopene in tomatoes and resveratrol in red grapes.
- All of these except dairy products have fiber which helps foods break down slowly. Carbs, and in particular fiber, promotes abundant healthy bacteria in the gut.

Which are bad carbs?

- Refined carbs and sugars- the white stuff- white sugar, white flour, white rice, all refined grains and the products made with them.
- The refining of flour from whole to white happened only about 200 years ago.
- The quality of grains has changed with GMO, hybridization, etc.



SUGAR DETOX PLAN

You're ready to kick the sugar habit...where do you begin?

In Chinese nutritional therapy, any imbalance or over-abundance of one of the five flavors (sweet, salty, bitter, acrid, sour) results in detrimental nutritional and energetic results.

The flavor of 'sweetness' is linked to the energy of the Earth element and the Spleen and Stomach or digestive system in Chinese medicine. When the Earth element is in harmony, a person feels grounded, centered, able to empathize and sympathize with others and gives and receives nurturance easily. Is your sugar craving resulting from feeling un-centered, unable to give or receive nurturance properly, or as a result or consequence of over-thinking or worry? Take time to check in with yourself, body mind and spirit.

Can you begin new behaviors to comfort and ground yourself that don't require sugar? Try meditation, grounding techniques, spending time out in nature, exercise and quality time with loved ones to strengthen your Spleen and Stomach energy. Become more aware of Mother Nature around you, which in turn energizes, grounds and supports the Earth element within you.

Small amounts of sugar consumed through complex carbohydrates and nutrient-dense whole foods are necessary and integral for fueling the body's energy. An over-abundance of refined sugar, as typically found in the American diet with over 150 pounds of sugar consumed by the average adult, can lead to disastrous results. Symptoms and diseases may include low energy, foggy-headedness, irritability, increased pain, headaches, difficult menstruation or infertility, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, immune deficiency, tooth decay, bone loss, hypertension, etc.

By reducing your intake of "sweet" whether from refined sugar and carbohydrates like white, bleached flour, rice or other grains or sugar-laden drinks including sodas, alcohol, fruit juices or treats, your body will appreciate you for it and you will notice changes very quickly, often within the first 3-5 days.

STEP 1: PREPARATION (Thursday- Sunday)

Changing your eating habits and overall lifestyle requires awareness, information and careful planning for long-term success.

- Go through your pantry and fridge, throw away all sugar-infused, processed snacks and treats. Eliminate all added or concentrated sugars from your kitchen. Remove "white" and refined foods as well – bleached flour or rice products, white potato products, also refined corn products.



- This includes any food with added sugar, whether from a natural source like honey or maple syrup or artificial sources like aspartame. (Includes white, brown, raw, or turbinado sugar, fructose, maltose, sorbitol, stevia, evaporated cane juice, xylitol, barley malt, honey, molasses, Splenda, etc.)
- Also be sure to remove alcohol and fruit juices - not just sodas - all these drinks contain high levels of sugar.
- Fruit in its natural raw state is okay to keep but dried fruit should be removed as it contains very high concentrations of sugar (dried raisins, cranberries, mangoes, etc.)
- Stock your fridge and pantry with healthy, whole foods. If you need ideas please look over the recipes and shopping lists provided. **By keeping healthy snacks and food choices around, you won't be tempted to indulge in too much sweet!**
- Start a diet diary if you find it helpful to keep track of what you're eating and how you feel afterward. Include space to write down exercise and relaxation activities for the day as well (or use the diet diary as a space to plan your meals).
- Look over the handout on "Easy Exercise Tips," just 30 minutes a day minimum can benefit your health and metabolism. The library is a great place to check out videos and other resources if the gym is out of your budget. There are also many recreational activities offered all year long. Check out Homer Community Recreation for more ideas and class listings: <http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation/recreational-classes>
- Cutting back on sugar, processed or "white" foods, caffeine and alcohol during the preparation phase of STEP 1 will help lessen your withdrawal symptoms when we begin STEP 2 on Monday.
- Plan meals if you find it's helpful- cook pots of soup, stews or other dishes on the weekend to help you through the week. If you don't know how to cook now is the time to start! Ask friends or family for cooking ideas, feel free to experiment, try the library or internet for videos, books and recipes.



STEP 2 : SUGAR DETOX BEGINS (On Monday - for 3 weeks minimum)

We are encouraging long-term health and lifestyle change and want you to create new behaviors and habits that will last a lifetime, not only the next 1-3 weeks!

Monday is your start date – be gentle with yourself and know that the first 3-5 days are usually the hardest. Your body, mind and emotions will be going through transition as excessive sugar is removed. After the first 3-5 days, you will most likely feel better – able to think more clearly, have more energy and less pain, feel more stable in your emotions.

FOODS TO AVOID:

- All sweeteners – sugar, artificial sweeteners; includes white, brown, raw, or turbinado sugar, fructose, maltose, sorbitol, stevia, evaporated cane juice, xylitol, barley malt, honey, molasses, Splenda, etc.
- Alcohol or fruit juice - drink water or herbal teas instead
- Refined “white” grains including bleached, enriched, refined wheat, rice, or other grain, including refined corn or corn products, also white potatoes and potato products
 - o Try cooking whole grains like quinoa, amaranth, wild rice or buckwheat instead

FOODS TO EAT:

- Unlimited vegetables, get crazy with the colors and varieties!
- Nuts, seeds (including nut butters)
- Organic, grass-fed, high quality protein including lean red meat, chicken, eggs, wild caught deep sea fish preferably salmon, halibut, cod, sardines, tuna and mackerel
- Beans & legumes including black, red, kidney, pinto, soy, mung, garbanzo, or adzuki beans, lentils
- Quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, wild rice, brown rice, oats
- Organic dairy in small amounts if you tolerate it, or healthy fats from avocados, coconut or olive oil

Here are some tips that may help you reduce your sugar cravings:

- Drink lots of water and herbal tea – water helps your body rebalance its natural state (becoming less acidic) and helps the liver, kidneys and other organ system detoxify from sugar.



- Eating breakfast every morning, especially with some protein will help keep your blood sugar levels stable.
- Slow down, chew your food carefully - savor the look, taste and feel of your food as you eat it. Eating too quickly or in excess contributes to poor digestion and often tricks you into thinking you need something sweet to feel satisfied.
- Eat sour, bitter or spicy flavors to counter-balance the over-abundance of sweet that you have been consuming. By removing added sugars from your diet, you will teach your body to re-calibrate its 'sweet-meter.' Within 3-5 days most people will notice they don't need as much sweet flavoring to feel satisfied and will start to notice that most foods they used to crave are actually way too sweet!
- Eat several small meals through the day to keep your blood sugar within the optimal range - not spiking and dropping drastically. Eating protein and healthy fats, and unlimited vegetables will help re-calibrate your taste buds and give you healthy, nutrient-dense energy instead of calorie-rich but nutrient-poor energy.
- Cravings usually last only 1-2 minutes. Do something to distract yourself – brush your teeth or swish some mouthwash and see if you still have the craving after 2 minutes.
- Sweating is important! Exercise, sauna, loufa, shower/baths, massage to help with the detoxification process.
- Sleep is very important too! When we are sleep deprived we increase production of a hormone that increases hunger and decreases satiety.
- If your craving for sweet is not going away, go ahead and have some raw fruit. A small serving of apples, pears, or handful of berries are great choices. Sprinkle a little cinnamon for more flavor or dip the fruit with nut butter for a tasty protein combination.

If you struggle with sugar cravings in the evening or later at night, try these ideas:

- Brush your teeth or use some mouthwash – once your mouth feels clean you're less likely to indulge, often the craving will pass in less than 1-2 minutes.
- Eat some protein like nut butter or cheese with a slice of apple, whole grain cracker, celery or carrot stick, or try a slice of turkey meat, smoked salmon, small plain yogurt or glass of milk with cinnamon or vanilla
- Drink licorice tea or another herbal tea
- Relaxation technique – deep breathing, music, self massage, warm bath, aromatherapy

You may feel nausea, headaches, irritability or fatigue as your body rids itself from this toxic element. The good news is that after this period of sugar withdrawal, you'll feel more energized, positive and clear-headed. Remember to exercise 30 minutes a day minimum, try a relaxation or grounding technique as needed, and hydrate and sweat to help detoxify. If you're finding you



need more support especially in the beginning, try acupuncture, massage or saunas to help you along this process.

Supplements to reduce cravings

Chromium picolinate- 200 – 500 mcg two to three times per day – helps keep BS levels in balance, regulates insulin- present in brewers yeast

Magnesium - 200-400 mg once or twice daily. Too much will cause loose stools. Used for energy production, the “relaxing” mineral chocolate craving may indicate a need for magnesium or iron. Used at bedtime will help promote sleep

B vitamins- 25- 50 mg once or twice per day with food. May add extra **Biotin** up to 15 mg daily. Nurtures nervous system and adrenals, benefits BS levels, decreases insulin resistance

Cinnamon- 1-2 tsp per day -reduces BS levels, natural sweet taste

Zinc- 15- 30 mg daily with food- improves healthy insulin response

Blueberries and **mulberries**- help regular BS levels and
Tea made from leaves beneficial

Rescue Remedy- homeopathic remedy that can be used multiple times daily when you feel the need to be “rescued”

Gymnema - tea, capsules (dose = 1 gram) or chew the leaves

Fenugreek- used as a spice or powder or extract (25 drops twice daily)

Licorice Rt – very sweet taste naturally. Use in tea, as a flavor

To help with liver function & detoxification process

Milk thistle- tea, liquid extract (25 drops 2-3X per day), capsules (2 caps 2-3X daily)

Detox tea- there are many choices

Lemon juice in water in the morning to alkalinize and stimulate liver function

Sugar cravings can be associated with Candida overgrowth, hypothyroidism, and/or adrenal stress/fatigue

A daily restorative practice can be of tremendous benefit- yoga, meditation, prayer, breath work, Tai Chi, Qi Gong are just a few examples



Exercise Tips for Busy People from the American Heart Association

Finding 30 minutes in your day to get physically active is a great starting point— and there are plenty of easy, no-cost ways to do it. Think you don't have time? **You'll get the same benefits if you divide your time into two or three 10- to 15-minute segments a day.**

"Our bodies were designed to be physically active, and they don't do well with long-term exposure to sedentary living. Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease," says Russell Pate, Ph.D., Department of Exercise at the University of South Carolina.

1. Get out the leash and walk your dog. It's a great activity for both man and man's best friend. Your heart — and your pooch — will thank you!

2. Take your child for a brisk walk. It's an excellent way to get some one-on-one time you're your kids and help them stay active too! Spice up your routine by exploring new neighborhoods, walking the spit or try snowshoeing at the Wynn Nature Center.

3. Store walk. Are you shivering at the idea of walking outside? Take a brisk stroll around your local stores instead. Window shop, people watch and give your heart a workout in a climate-controlled environment.

4. Join a team or try a new sport. Check out Homer Community Recreation for activities in and around Homer (<http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation>) or contact Mike Ilg at 907-235-6090. Homer has everything from ballet, gymnastics, swimming and pickleball to table tennis and ballroom dancing! And of course there's plenty of cross country skiing and ice skating as well.

5. Walk and talk. Even if you're glued to your phone for work calls, you don't have to be glued to your seat. Make it a habit to talk and walk.

6. Tune into fitness during TV time. Reject your inner couch potato. Walk, jog in place or use the treadmill while watching your favorite 30-minute show or sports team.

7. Park and walk. How many times have you circled the parking lot to find "the" spot? Spare yourself the stress, gain more energy and burn more calories by parking far away (or even in a remote lot) and walking farther to your destination.

8. Take the stairs. The elevator may go up — but it doesn't make your heart rate climb. Take the stairs as often as you can. You may huff and puff at first, but over time, your body will thank you.

9. Dance! Do it in Zumba, Hooping classes, an athletic club or even in your living room. You'll burn calories and gain a new hobby.

10. Skip the cake, say goodbye to pie and take a walk after dinner. You'll get a reward that's sweeter than dessert: more family time, fresh air and better digestion.