



## End Sugar Addiction and Feel Better

### Sugar and its Effects on Your Mind

by  
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Few of us are aware of just how much sugar we consume or of the terrible effects it can have on our brain – and our mind.

After all, sugar is practically everywhere. Not only is it in the sugar we put consciously into our drinks, it's hidden away in so many of the foods we eat. It's in breakfast cereals, jams and fruit juices, sauces and soups, breads, cakes and desserts. In fact it's there in practically every ready-made, pre-prepared and convenience food you can buy.

From childhood on, most of us have become accustomed to the pleasing taste and uplifting fix of sugar-sweetened drinks and foods. They were scoffed at parties, given as rewards or pacifiers, used to make us feel good and snatched as 'pick-me-ups'. In one form or another they seem to have been there all the way as we were growing up.

The sugar industry, of course, will never tire of telling us that sugar is good for us and that it's there in so many natural foods. And in this last point they're right.

Of course sugars are present in almost all foods, from the lactose in milk, to the fructose in fruit, but these are healthy sugars when eaten in their healthy whole-food state and our body – and brain – has no difficulty in processing this kind of sugar without sustaining damage.

It's refined sugar – particularly sucrose – that's the bad guy here. And it doesn't matter whether it comes in the form of white or brown sugar, or if it's disguised as 'corn syrup' or 'evaporated cane juice' it's equally as bad.

Just why is sugar not good for us?

Well, this kind of sugar has been robbed of all its natural elements. In almost every way it has been 'de-natured'. Gone are the health-giving B vitamins and minerals, gone is the fibre that would have allowed it to be properly and slowly assimilated. All that is left is the sweetness and the empty calories.

Although refined sugar has the short-term ability to quickly lift us up, it lets us down even faster.

Just as soon as our body realises that we have eaten sugar, it causes our pancreas to rapidly pump out insulin in order to cope with it. Its job is to keep our blood sugar levels balanced and even. Sooner or later, though, we become resistant to this insulin-flooding and so, in much the same way that the addict requires more and more drugs to maintain any kind of equilibrium, the body craves more insulin to do the same job. It's a 'Catch-22' situation: the over-abundance of insulin fools our body and brain into thinking that it's starving and so we find ourselves driven to eat more and more sugar-laden foods, and so it continues, on and on in an ever downward spiral.

But what does this constant overabundance of sugar-induced insulin do to the brain?

- It affects our moods, producing anxiety, depression, and insomnia.
- It acts on the appetite centre of the brain, causing us to overeat and crave foods – especially foods containing sugar.
- It ages the brain, increasing oxidation and inflammation and decreasing cognitive function.

But it's not just the brain and mind that are affected, high blood sugar levels create hyperglycaemia, which can easily lead on to diabetes and problems with the pancreas itself. In addition, arthritis and problems of the digestive tract: bowel disease, constipation and excessive flatulence are commonly found in those with high sugar consumption.

Simply put, if you really value your mental balance and your health, you will have as little as possible to do with all forms of refined sugar. If you are serious about removing refined sugar from your life then you'll need to make some adjustments in the way you live your life. There are so many foods that do not contain any added sugar – find out what they are and concentrate on them. Focus not on what you cannot eat, but on all the wonderful, healthy things that you can eat.

Learn to read labels, checking for hidden sugars; remember manufacturers sometimes attempt to disguise sugars by calling them something else. Be on your guard for: sucrose, corn syrup, raw sugar, dextrose, maltose, fructose, molasses, turbinado sugar, barley malt, maple syrup, sorghum syrup, mannitol and fruit juice concentrate.

Plan ahead. Just clean out your cupboard and perhaps start to take sugar-free foods and small amounts of fresh fruit with you to work in plastic containers. You've heard it before, but I'll say it again: Never skip breakfast. Eating a healthy breakfast containing some raw fruit, oats or muesli with unsweetened soy milk will help keep blood sugar levels stable and also reduce your appetite, so you will have less desire to snack.

You may experience some withdrawal symptoms, but it's best to get it over and done with as quickly as possible. It's estimated to take between 4 to 7 days to clear the physical addiction. The psychological addiction obviously can take longer, but be persistent. Once you get through the first few days and then the first couple of weeks then things will get easier. Remember, it's your mental and physical health that's at stake here.

Be sure to find new ways to feel good and comfort yourself. Reward yourself with a piece of fresh fruit, a nice relaxing bath, a good book or magazine. Learn how to relax – listen to therapeutic hypnosis recordings, learn self-hypnosis, practice meditation, learn yoga, and be sure to make time to exercise.

Freeing yourself from sugar addiction improves the health of your mind, brain and body, improving energy and endurance, making you feel and look healthier and younger.

And after all, what could be sweeter than that?

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