

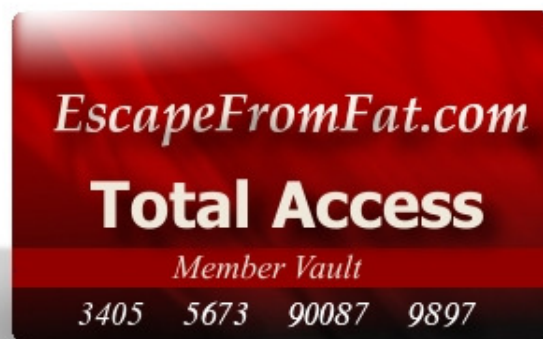


How to Conquer Food and Sugar Cravings

By

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Introduction

There are times when we all reach for some type of comfort food and after a few mouthfuls the world seems like a better place.

But now scientists believe that the secret behind comfort foods is all in the mind, as foods that are high in sugar and fat can alter the chemicals in the brain and can help to relax us.

Foods high in carbohydrates like pasta raise levels of serotonin in the brain and so make us feel better. It seems that high levels of stress in early life can change how nerves form in the brain and foods high in sugar or fat help to balance these changes and make us feel better.

In research done on rats they found that those who underwent stress in the beginning of their lives had higher stress levels than normal. But when these rats were fed fattening foods their levels of stress and anxious behavior dropped.

So, if you feel guilty for reaching for that candy bar don't put it down to poor will power, you now know there are other things at play here.

7 Things You Need To Know To Conquer Your Food Craving Demons.

Food cravings can affect even the most determined dieter and can mean different things to different people. For example you can have the "harmless" cravings for things like chocolate to chips and starchy foods like French fries to on the harmful side, non-food substances like clay, laundry starch or other items.

1 - Food cravings can be a sign of low blood sugar and or a diet too low in calories. Remember don't starve yourself as this is most likely to lead to you experience cravings and to give in to temptation.

2 - Sometimes giving in to a craving is a better solution that avoiding it. For example women who tried to stop thinking about chocolate, ate 50% more than those who were encouraged to talk about their cravings. The women who had tried to suppress their cravings ate on average eight chocolates, while those who had talked freely about it ate five.

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3 - Emotions can have an affect on cravings - low mood or feeling tired means low serotonin which leads us to craving sugar and / or carbohydrates.

4 - Food cravings and so called comfort food cravings are often really just stress signals misinterpreted. For example if foods with pleasurable tastes and textures were used as a reward or to provide solace during childhood, then the psychological component for craving such foods grows even stronger.

5 - There's is a difference between craving and addiction, food addiction is a serious problem and should be treated by a physician and/or dietician as soon as it's identified.

6 - Drink plenty of water as dehydration can sometimes be mistaken for hunger and can increase cravings, especially for sweet foods.

7 - If you crave ice cream, have a scoop instead of eating too much of something "healthy." It may sound like you're cheating on your diet but giving in a little bit is a lot better than going without over a long period and then pigging out! This won't do your diet or confidence any good.

In many ways, treatment of food addiction is similar to drug and alcohol addiction. The first step to recovery is recognizing and accepting the problem, and identifying which foods cause allergic symptoms and cravings.

However, unlike drug and alcohol addiction, food addicts can't quit cold turkey. Instead of taking drastic measures, make the following changes gradually, one small step at a time.

1 - Sweet foods are a problem area for food addicts. As you crave foods that are laden with sugar you're taste buds get used to the flavor and you usually start craving sweeter and sweeter foods. To cut back on this problem they to avoid buying foods that aren't supposed to be sweet, like pasta sauce, bread, and crackers or contain added sweeteners like fructose, dextrose, and corn syrup.

2 - Avoid having foods you crave in your house, or your car or some hidden spot where you can get to them in a hurry. It may sound like a simple thing to do but not having those

foods around keep temptation out of the way and gives you a chance to find some other way to work out your problem other than relying on food.

3 - Food addiction is a fake hunger and to get over this problem you need to become aware of what you are eating. The best way to do this is to maintain a food journal. In your food journal list when and what you eat during the day, and how it makes you feel. Over time you'll notice trends food and situations that are to blame for your problem.

4 - Remember that food addiction is a short circuit to feeling better. But it is also a short circuit in another sense, the more you use this mechanism, the more you bypass ways of managing your feelings that could make your life better. Relying on food won't make those problems go away they will return another day and you'll never have come to terms with your problem. The more you avoid learning, the more you need the cure, which makes you avoid learning all the more, which makes you eat.

5 - People with food addiction often overeat because the signals that traditionally tell the body to stop eating don't happen. To solve this problem retrain your brain to feel full on less food, by using smaller plates and bowls which force you to dish out smaller portions.

6 - The internet can also be a very helpful way of finding online support groups and clubs to help food addicts or compulsive eaters. Two very useful resource groups and websites to help food addicts are "Overeaters Anonymous" and "Food Addicts" in recovery anonymous. Both programs are based on the twelve steps and twelve traditions of alcoholics anonymous.

Sugar Addiction – Are You Addicted To The White Stuff?

Our natural instinct is to appreciate sweet tastes even from birth with breast milk. This helped with our survival when our ancestors were foraging for herbs, ground roots and berries.

But times have changed and the majority of modern diets involve sugar in some form. Sugar is very difficult to avoid, as it is

included in most prepared and prepackaged foods. From the obvious soft drinks and alcohol to salad dressings and condiments, sugar is involved in most foods, either for taste or as a preservative.

Addiction to sugar is not the result of a mental disorder, character flaw or weak will. The roots of sugar addiction, as well as any other addiction, lie in neurotransmitters in the reward pathway of the brain. Sugar addiction develops in several different ways.

Partly it is due to the fact that sugar effects the area in the brain called the reward pathway in the same manner as drugs and alcohol, it over stimulates the neurotransmitters until they no longer function properly, tolerance develops and the mind becomes dependent on sugar to function.

Additionally, because sugar is void of any nutritional value, the body never gets the chromium and other essential nutrients it needs and therefore it keeps craving more.

However addiction to sugar can also be due to fact that you're allergic or sensitive to it. When you're allergic or sensitive to a food you often develop an addiction to it. An addiction to anything including sugar is something that we do in order to avoid a negative feeling or symptom.

People use sugar as a comfort food and a form of self-medication, but because addictions tend to deteriorate our bodies, we often feel better with the addictive substance, but the end result is usually that we feel worse of can't perform as best as we should.

For example with sugar it temporarily increases energy and elevates happiness and a feeling of well-being. After a period of blood sugar spikes, there is a drop in blood sugar, or sugar crash, that occurs, leaving the person lethargic and needing another pick me up.

If you feel that you may suffer from a sugar addiction make the decision to try to stop eating it completely for at least 4 days although the longer the better and sticking to it. While I usually recommend making small changes gradually to your diet, sugar has the unique ability to inspire cravings which are refueled every time you give into them.

The only way to break the cycle is to stop feeding the fire. Once your sugar tolerance has normalized you can reintroduce it in small amounts, so long as you are sure you are eating for pleasure and not

from habit. If you hope to get through it, you must have a strategy for diverting yourself from temptation.

Start by removing all sweets (especially your weakness) from the house. If you do not want to throw things out, try giving them away at work or even sealing them up and putting them somewhere you can't get to them. Making it impossible to cheat will greatly increase your probability of success.

Then try to introduce fruit or vegetables that have a sweet flavor that can satisfy your sweet tooth but don't have an hidden sugars. Other ways to overcome a sugar addiction are to keep a food journals, living by strict dietary menus and taking cooking classes to learn how to make low-sugar or sugar-free meals.

If you feel that you do have a big problem with sugar the best advice I would give is to get in touch with your doctor or health practioner who can guide you on the best practices that will work for you.

Do You Really Know Sugar?

There is a chemical that is only one molecule off from alcohol and one chemical (it is missing nitrogen) off from cocaine. This chemical substance causes the user to feel safe, secure and invincible. It heightens the senses and causes brain function abnormalities.

The withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety, depression, a harsh craving for another shot, low or absent energy levels, headaches, flu-like symptoms, harsh mood swings, and even skin rashes. It's addictive properties are comparable to heroin. This drug is extremely dangerous to your health and the health of others.

Would you take this substance or let your kids take it? Most likely you do. I have just described refined sugar.

Today's world is inundated with sugar. Most quick foods that fit into our hectic lifestyles have sugars. Simple sugars, refined sugars, hidden sugars, and even sugars that don't look like sugars. Enough of the sweet stuff! Our ancestors didn't have processed foods and they didn't have a lot of health problems that plague today's society. Sugar addiction is real and sugar addiction is dangerous. It is time to get back to eating healthy, natural foods.

There are two types of sugar – complex and refined.

Complex sugars are made up of three or more sugar molecules linked together. They take more energy for the body to break down. Complex sugar is found in whole wheat products, oatmeal, brown rice and root vegetables. These sugars are good for you in moderation.

Simple sugars mostly contain refined sugar which is not a food at all. Refined sugar is a manufactured chemical added to foods. Natural simple sugars like honey and fruits, can be eaten in moderation with no adverse effects, but refined sugar is made by taking a natural food, chemically processing it, then boiling it, which destroys all vitamins and nutrients. As many as 64 vitamins and other nutrients are destroyed in this process. All liquid is removed through evaporation and a centrifuge machine, then the crystals are bleached white with animal bones such as pork or beef.

Many times manufacturers and food companies will add refined sugar to improve the taste of the item. Some foods that you wouldn't think have sugar may surprise you; pancake mixes, meats, hamburger and hot dog buns, salads, some salt, etc. And food isn't the only place where sugar can be found. Believe it or not, other everyday items have hidden sugar. Vitamins, toothpaste, lip gloss, lickable stamps and envelopes, laxatives, cough medicines, etc all have refined sugars. It is no wonder we have an addiction to sugar.

Sugar addiction *can* be beat. The best way to kick a sugar habit is to begin eating foods that can reduce the cravings – and stop eating the foods that increase your dependence on sugar. Diet is even more important than other lifestyle changes when it comes to beating sugar addiction.

If you do feel you have a problem with sugar here are...

10 Sugar Craving Tips

1 - Sugar cravings can be a sign of hormonal imbalances due to a nutritional deficiency in the body. A poor diet or hormonal imbalance can cause you to feel tired or a little down and you reach for sugar as a "pick me up."

2 - Replace the sweets you are consuming with healthy alternatives, such as fruit. They taste sweet, will

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supplement your sugar cravings but will not have the same negative affects on your body as sugar, which is empty of nutrients and vitamins.

3 - Find ways to fulfill your cravings for sweets without giving up sweets entirely. Instead of eating an entire candy bar, replace it with a "fun" size candy bar (but make sure you stick to one only).

4 - Eating too quickly can also cause your blood sugar levels to rise quickly. This means that your blood sugar levels will decrease sooner making you feel hungry again. By eating your meals slowly helps you avoid these spikes in blood sugar levels and possible sugar cravings.

5 - Switch to wholegrain foods such as wholegrain bread, pasta and rice. As the body processes the over refined and over processed white flour as sugar, it can affect you the same way sugar does.

6 - Identify your triggers for sugar cravings and then try to avoid them. Common triggers for sugar cravings are boredom, lack of energy and stress. Try to find alternative ways of dealing with these triggers and you'll be well on the path to beating your sugar cravings.

7 - Scientists believe that we instinctively reach for food that increases the "happiness hormone" (serotonin) and one of the fastest ways is with sugar. Sugar is the body's quickest source of energy and can change our mood. If you're feeling down find a healthier way to raise serotonin with some exercise, like a short walk.

8 - Some people report that having some protein instead of sugar when the cravings hit helps to quieten down their cravings.

9 - One of the most common causes of sugar cravings is irregular eating. If you skip meals or eat on an unpredictable schedule, this can result in catapulting your body into a state of starvation. As a result, your body sends out messages that it needs energy in a hurry and sends out sugar cravings. The easy solution to this is to make sure that you are eating more frequent, smaller meals each day.

10 - You might think you've taken as much sugar out of your diet already but sugar comes in various guises that you

might not know. Here are other names for sugar on food labels...corn syrup, demerara sugar, dextrose, free flowing brown sugars, fructose, galactose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, invert sugar, lactose, malt, molasses, maple syrup, sucrose, and maltose.

Finally while you may think sugar causes food cravings, don't rule out the problems salt can cause you..

Is Salt To Blame For Your Food Cravings?

Do you feel compelled to add an extra pinch of salt to your foods even before you taste them; chances are you've got an addiction to salt.

But rather than adding salt to food for the added spice it gives to your food, you're probably adding it to because it puts you in a better mood.

I bet you never thought of that?

But according to researchers in the University of Iowa people who go with out salt can become depressed. They found that salt puts people in as better mood and creates cravings comparable to a drug addiction.

Although some salt is needed in the body to help fluids pass through the body too much can cause health problems like high blood pressure and heart disease.

Professor Kim Johnson who did tests on rats found that when salt levels were lowered they lost that pleasure in things like a sugary drink. They also noticed a similar change in brain activity when the rats were denied drugs. "This suggests that salt need and cravings may be linked to the same brain pathways as those related to drug addiction and abuse," Prof Johnson said.

While some people out there may say that obesity is a matter of poor will power it seems that manufacturers of food are designing food to become more addictive and salt seems to be a great way of doing this. While we all know the dangers of eating too much sugary foods, salt hasn't gotten as much press until lately, with ads on British TV highlighting the fact of high salt content in foods.

But you need to become more aware of this because salt is now being added to almost all types of food and camouflaged with high levels of sugar to sweeten the taste.

This is probably why a portion of salty French fries tastes so good when it's washed down with your favorite soda drink. The salt gives us an initial hit and heightens the feeling for the sugary taste of the soda. If you think about it we've allowed our food to dictate to us what we should eat rather than the other way around.

So the next time you get a craving for something sweet think back, was that last food that I ate high in salt content? Chances are it was, and know you know where that cravings coming from.

If you'd like to know more about food cravings visit <http://www.EscapeFromFat.com/food-cravings/> now and discover how natural foods can help you both lose weight *and* safeguard you and your family's health.

See you next time.

Barry J. McDonald



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