



Getting The Sugar Monkey Off Your Back

By Kelly DuBois

Do you crave certain foods even if you're not hungry?

Do you overeat certain foods?

Do you feel sluggish or fatigued from overeating?

Do you have health or social problems because of food issues and continue eating the way you do despite negative consequences?

Do you need more and more of the foods you crave to experience any pleasure or reduce negative emotions?

If you answered yes to 1 of these questions then you probably answered yes to all of them and you are, like many others, addicted to sugar.

Over 70% of us have had our taste buds, brain chemistry and hormones hijacked by the food industry. The addictive properties of sugar are incredibly powerful and the food industry knows this. Hidden sugar is added to just about every packaged, boxed, canned and bottled food. The food industry knows we love the taste and the more we get, the more we want. It's not surprising that our consumption has increased from 10 pounds per person in the 1800's, when it wasn't so easy to get, to 140 pounds per person per year today, when it's almost impossible to avoid. The average American also consumes 133 pounds of white or wheat flour, which is higher on the glycemic index than table sugar, raising blood sugar even MORE than table sugar. Sugar and these other high glycemic index foods are some of the most addictive substances on the planet.

Some animal studies have shown that sugar is eight times more addictive than cocaine. Many human studies have shown that sugar and other foods that have a high glycemic index affect the pleasure center of the brain. This area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens lights up like a Christmas tree in subjects who are fed small amounts or even shown images of sweet treats.

We are also hard wired to crave sugar. The evolutionary purpose of this was to fatten us up in preparation for the long winters when food was scarce. That's right, sugar stimulates FAT STORAGE! Every time you eat sugar you're sending hormonal signals to STORE FAT, STORE FAT AND STORE FAT! This basic biochemistry is still in place and our bodies don't know that it's as easy for us to get sugar (and other foods) in the winter as any other time of the year. When we eat sugar or anything that stimulates a strong insulin spike, our bodies store fat.

Sugar and processed carbs = increased blood glucose = insulin spike = fat storage. And when insulin is high, our fat burning hormones (glucagon and GH) are turned off. The other hormone that plays a part in the fat loss/fat storage equation (the bad side) is cortisol. Cortisol is known as the stress hormone but technically it's a blood glucose hormone. Cortisol will EAT UP muscle and increase blood sugar. FUN FACT: 1 pound of muscle burns 8 to 10 calories a day and 1 pound of fat burns only 2 to 3 calories a day. In addition to promoting fat storage and working the addiction pathways the same way as many drugs, it can destroy our health. Sugar consumption promotes cancer, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high triglycerides, inflammatory conditions and premature aging.

The best way to get off sugar is to go cold turkey. It's tough and life will suck a little for about 10 days. Once you have it out of your system you won't crave it and it feels fantastic to not have to deal with the constant gnawing cravings! If cold turkey seems a bit too extreme for you, there are a few things you can do to minimize your cravings.

1) GET PLENTY OF SLEEP (8-10 hours)

When the body is sleep deprived it releases Cortisol and the hunger hormone, Ghrelin.

2) APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

2 tablespoons a day will help to stabilize blood sugar levels.

3) DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Often the body mistakes dehydration for hunger. Drink at least 50% of your body weight in ounces of water.

4) EAT PROTEIN WITH EVERY MEAL

Protein slows down the rise in blood glucose by stimulating glucagon. Protein also stimulates the release of appetite suppressing hormones.

5) SUPPLEMENT WITH A GREEN DRINK

This increase the body's alkalinity and provides Magnesium. When we're deficient in Magnesium we crave sugar.

6) DRINK GREEN TEA

Green tea stimulates the release of the appetite suppressing hormone CCK (cholecystokinin).

7) AVOID ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

They signal that something sweet is coming and when the body doesn't get the actual, calorie loaded sugar, it craves more sweet.

8) WAIT OUT YOUR CRAVINGS

Most cravings pass within 20 minutes. If you still have the craving after 20 minutes then eat something healthy.

9) BE PREPARED

If you have healthy snacks at your desk, in your refrigerator, car, etc. then you be less likely to cave when the sugar monkey hits!

10) DARK CHOCOLATE

If you HAVE to have a treat, have a square of dark chocolate (70% and above cocoa) The steric acid in dark chocolate slows digestion and the bitter taste dials down hunger.