



sweetpoison

**Why Sugar Is Killing You and
How To Quit It For Good**



Table of Contents

How Sugar is Slowly Killing You	3
The Real Problem with Sugar	4
The Basics of Refined Sugar & What Lies Beyond	6
Sugar: Friend or Foe?	10
Aspartame.....	12
The Cane Sugar vs. Corn Sugar Debate	14
How Much Sugar is Too Much?	16
Decoding the Sugar Label	17
The 10 Most Common Foods Filled With Sugar (That You'd Never Suspect)	19
Kick the Sugar Habit to Take Back Your Health	23
Your 28-Day Sugar Detox.....	34
Recap: The Bittersweet Truth about Sugar	36
Recommended Recipes	36

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How Sugar is Slowly Killing You

How could something that tastes so good be so bad for you? Depending on how you're getting it and from where, sugary products have been designed by manufacturers to hook, line and sink your sweet tooth into full addiction mode.

Is sugar toxic? It could be, depending on how much of it you consume on a regular basis.

The average Brits and Americans consume 150 pounds of sugar per person per year. In simple terms, that's dozens of pounds potentially added to your body, and over the course of a lifetime, that can equal 100 unwanted pounds hanging on your belly, thighs and upper arms.

Why is sugar so powerful? Because it gives you more of the pleasure brain chemical known as dopamine. And since pleasure is something we all want more of, we continue to crave more and more of the surge of good feelings we get from sugar until it becomes an out-of-control addiction.

Why not take back the control of your life, and seek new – and healthier ways – to experience pleasure?

Addiction aside, what is so bad about sugar as a substance in the first place?

By itself, sugar is ok. In fact, we need a little sugar in our diet. After all, how could we possibly eat fruits, whole grains, and even dairy products without it? Natural sugar is not the poison; artificial and manufactured sugar is, and the amount of sugar we digest is the poison.

That's why so many scientists, doctors and specialists in the field of medicine repeat this warning over and over: Don't eat refined sugar, but if you do, do it in moderation.

The rise of refined and artificial sugars has caused us – all of us who digest it on a regular basis – to no longer have an insulin response, and when that happens, sugar is

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stored as fat, not energy. And over a long period of time, that insulin resistance becomes full-blown diabetes.

The Real Problem with Sugar

When you eat an excess of sugar, it goes right to your bloodstream (which accounts for that peak in energy just when you need it most). When it goes into your bloodstream, your blood sugar rises, thus causing your insulin to work overtime. Over a period of years, your metabolism is no longer able to do its job – which is to metabolize sugar as energy. Instead, it stores it as fat, which can cause a plethora of health problems. Feel like developing a weak immune system, chronic fatigue or Alzheimer's?

If not, keep reading.

Broken down in simple terms, that means that when you drink a 20-ounce can of soda, or munch on your favorite cookies (manufactured to death!) what you're really doing is adding something toxic to your system. You're causing your body to refuse the hormones which prevent it from storing blood sugar correctly.

Not sure how much sugar is sneaking its way into your food? Consider the following as a wake-up call:

- Sugar is added to canned vegetables and fruits to keep them fresh.
- Sugar is added to fish for a glossy look.
- Up to two cups of sugar or artificial sweetener is added to soft drinks – even those that are marketed as diet or zero-calorie.
- Sugar is added to patties, such as turkey burgers or ground beef, to reduce the amount of shrinkage and juiciness.
- Sugar is hiding in condiments such as ketchup, mayo and even low-cal salad dressings, often under the names glucose, lactose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, hydrogenated starch, polyols, xylitol, sorghum and molasses.
- Sugar (and plenty of it) is hiding in most processed breads found at the grocery store. It may not taste sweet, but check the nutrition label!

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- Sugar is in soup mixes, pasta mixes, yogurt (even fat-free and low-cal varieties), wine, cereal, dried fruit, cough drops, crackers, peanut butter, canned tuna, canned baby food, French fries, packaged pasta sauce, and much more.
- Sugar is added to “healthy” drinks such as coconut water, juice, sports drinks and smoothies.

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The Basics of Refined Sugar & What Lies Beyond

No matter how much sugar is in your life, or how you feel about it, the truth is there are a lot of sugar-haters out there. Those people, educated and informed on the subject of the process of sugar, believe due to dozens of studies about the effects of sugar that it is to be feared and banned outright.

Should you pass on that piece of pie, chocolate cake or cookie? Should you say no to eating fast food indefinitely? Do you really have to reject your grandmother's traditional baklava at family gatherings?

Maybe.

Maybe you should for the sake of your immune system, your cardiovascular health, and for the sake of your children (who watch every move you make, including what you eat).

Here are some more startling facts about the ramifications of a high sugar intake and just what too much of the sweet stuff can lead to:

- **Sugar is addictive.** Studies have shown that pregnant moms who consume more than 40 grams of sugar (the recommended daily allotment for added sugar) can cause their growing fetus to become addicted as well.
- **Your infant may love juice, but it can cause them pain.** Back in the day before processed and packaged foods took over the grocery stores, parents and children alike got a natural source of fruit juice – from the fruits themselves.

There's a difference between pulling an apple off of an apple tree and eating it in its pure form and drinking apple juice from a concentrated source. When you drink juice, it doesn't have anywhere near the same nutritional value that the whole fruit does.

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Why not?

Because concentrated juices (which are cheaper for juice suppliers to provide) are stripped of nutrition and loaded with sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Sugar is stored in your body, and although it tastes great, even innocent juice can become an addiction, even without the vitamins and fiber your body needs.

- **Sugar can harm cholesterol levels.** Studies have shown the connection between sugar and lowering your good cholesterol. People who ate the least amount of sugar (40 grams or less per day) had the highest levels of good cholesterol, which has been shown to protect your body from health disease.

Those who ate more than the recommended daily allotment of sugar? They had low levels of good cholesterol, which could as much as triple their chances of heart disease.

- **Sugar makes you fat – period.** No matter how much you spend in the gym, working off last night's dessert (and, let's be real here, the last four days' worth of sugary foods) could take hours upon hours to work off. Even though a cardio-blasting dance or spin class will burn up to 1,000 calories, any sugar that wasn't used as soon as you ate it has already been stored as fat.

Unless you have all day, every day to burn off all the sugar you consume, it sits in your body as an accumulation of energy it can't process. Use the way sugar is stored as a motivator to pursue a better, fitter and leaner body. If you must eat sugar, do so immediately before vigorous physical activity so your body can use it right away.

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- **It causes constipation.** During the sugar process, nutrients and vitamins that are essential for your body to metabolize are stripped away. Because too much sugar can't be processed by your body's system, and it doesn't offer fiber to help flush away the toxins, your digestive system isn't able to process it correctly, which leads to being all stopped up.
- **Sugar has been shown to cause dehydration.** When your body becomes dehydrated, every part (including your mind) has to work harder in an effort to compensate for a lack of water – your liver, immune system, nausea, fatigue, digestion, blood pumping to the heart, and oxygen. And one of the main culprits of dehydration is sugar.

When you eat too much sugar, your blood glucose levels skyrocket, which causes frequent urination as your body attempts to dump out the sugar. Worried about becoming pre-diabetic? Look out for one of the biggest signs: frequent urination. And keep reading to learn creative ways to reduce your daily sugar intake!

- **Sugar contributes to a diabetic lifestyle.** There's an ongoing debate about what causes the onset of diabetes and insulin resistance (aka pre-diabetes). The truth is sugar isn't the only culprit, and it doesn't *directly* cause diabetes.

If you are addicted to sugar – you have it daily and can't imagine your latte without vanilla syrup, or can't go one day without eating dessert – know that a large consumption of sugar over time can cause obesity. It's obesity that then leads to diabetes.

If you drink one soda a day (a habit of millions around the world), reduce that intake by having one soda every other day, and then one a week, and so on.

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This will help you slowly reduce your dependence on sugar, and you'll begin to lose weight and remove the diabetic risk.

- **Sugar can cause cancer, dementia and heart disease.** If you want to extend your life by years and years, staying in excellent health well into old age, start by taking an honest look at your sugar intake. If you want to skip being the next one in line to become diagnosed with high blood pressure or fatty liver in your family, take back control of your diet to gain the health that is rightfully yours.

Sugar causes a variety of cancers. Sugar causes heart disease. Sugar causes an increase in your appetite (especially an appetite for more sugar). Sugar causes weight gain, fatigue and even depression. Sugar can even contribute to the onset of dementia.

- **Sugar contributes to ADHD in young children.** No two kids are alike. But feed any little one sugary treats, soda and processed snacks loaded with high fructose corn syrup, and you just might end up with a hyperactive child on your hands.

Sugar doesn't just run the risk of boosting your child's energy level; it also has the ability to develop concentration and attention issues in young children, which can last a lifetime.

Do you want your children to live their best, happiest and most rewarding life? Of course you do. Start by reducing the amount of daily sugar they're used to with creative meals cooked at home, less frequent fast food runs, and finding new ways to bring in whole grain, complex carbs to the dinner table.

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Sugar: Friend or Foe?

Is sugar your friend or foe? If you've lived a life of sugar over-indulgence, now's the time to review what your diet may be doing to you in the long run. In other words, if sugar doesn't scare you yet, maybe it should.

For example, if you're looking to lose weight, an artificial sweetener with zero calories can be a tempting addition to your diet. The problem is, when it comes down to it, sugar is sugar.

You may save yourself some calories from refined sugar if you're drinking coffee with Splenda or Equal, but the effects on your brain are much the same – when you taste something sweet, it makes you crave more sugar. So, Sweet n Low to Splenda, refined sugar to brown sugar . . . all of them lead to a dangerous food addiction.

If you want to eliminate your chances of becoming obese, diabetic or developing a range of cancerous diagnoses, limit your sugar intake. All added sugar goes through a chemical process before it goes from the farmer's hands to your grocery store shelves, and that equals a ton of toxic chemicals your body has to deal with – and that it can't deal with.

It's a no-brainer, isn't it? Sugar isn't your friend. It's quite the enemy in an entertaining disguise.

Here's what to know so that you can be an informed buyer and control what you put in your body, as well as stay on top of preventive health. (There's no more room for ignorance here –it's your body after all.)

Refined sugar, otherwise known as sucrose, contains glucose and fructose (50 percent of each to make up the whole of refined sugar).

The granulated sugar that ends up in your pantry, or that is found in convenient pre-packages in every dinner and snack doesn't come off from the earth looking like that.

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Instead, it goes through quite a process, which injects toxic chemicals and strips of all nutrients your body needs to thrive.

It starts off from beets and cane, which is then heated through a chemical process of extraction. What's added back in to make it taste so good going down? Calcium hydroxide and carbon dioxide – which are both toxins – but necessary to remove anything dark, including impurities but also nutrients, to create a clear, solid substance for cooking purposes.

The end result is a food that is processed multiple times and finally resembles more of an addictive drug than anything else. The bottom line is, no matter what you're digesting – table sugar, high fructose corn syrup, honey, molasses or artificial sweeteners – *sugar is sugar*, and most of the stuff you consume is “added sugar.”

High fructose corn syrup is made up of 55 percent fructose (the sweet stuff which makes those cakes, sodas and cookies taste so good) and 45 percent glucose. That's a whole lot of sugar, but it's also a whole lot cheaper for sugar manufacturers to produce.

The manufacturers of subsidized corn growers are brilliant at what they do: The cheaper they provide food suppliers with high fructose corn syrup, the more money they make. The more money they make, the higher amount of syrup is added into the foods you then crave. The more you eat, the more they grow, and the vicious cycle of sugar addiction continues through generation after generation.

The corn industry is very adamant about setting the record straight for millions of those Americans and others who see the drawbacks about the toxicity of corn sugar. Sure, it's from corn, but how good is it, really? And what is it doing to our longevity, cholesterol levels and obesity epidemic? (Keep reading for the truth about high fructose corn syrup, what the corn suppliers don't want you to know!)

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Aspartame

Aspartame, which is the culprit ingredient of Nutrasweet, Equal, and countless diet sodas, may give off the impression that you're saving yourself some calories by switching to calorie-free sweeteners. However, dieters beware: what it also causes are adverse reactions – up to 75 percent of people experience side effects, including seizures and death, as reported to the FDA.

Aspartame is good at one thing – it allows consumers to replace table sugar in everything from their coffee to their coffee cake with a sweeter, zero-calorie version of what they're addicted to.

What the chemical fails to do is give your body what it needs to thrive. Instead, it has been reported to cause migraines, headaches, stomach ulcers, insomnia, vision problems, hearing loss, diabetes, Alzheimer's, brain tumors and dizziness.

Doesn't sound much like sugar anymore, does it? In fact, some scientists and doctors have labeled it a poison.

Aspartame is made from 40 percent aspartic acid, which is an amino acid. The remaining 50 percent is phenylalanine, and when you have too much phenylalanine in your blood, you run a risk of depression. The remaining ten percent of aspartame is made from wood alcohol, which is essentially poison for the body.

Can't help but be addicted to your afternoon diet soda? Then consider this: Wood alcohol (otherwise known as methanol) absorbs in your body as formaldehyde. While you may recognize formaldehyde as the chemical that is used to preserve dead bodies, it's also the stuff in your "diet" drinks, cakes and cookies.

Honey is a smart alternative to white sugar because its natural elements aren't extracted during the manufactured process – but just be careful to buy it from a reputable source! Lots of honey that's on store shelves has been processed and can

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even contain refined sugars. Look for the word “pure,” and if possible, buy from a farmers’ market or local beekeeper.

Maple syrup offers a slightly different taste but is pure in its original form. Use it as an alternative while detoxing off of refined sugar, and before you know it, you’ll never miss the worst stuff: high fructose corn syrup, white sugar and artificial sweeteners. Instead, you’ll thrive on a whole food diet rich with all the nutrients, enzymes and vitamins you need to sustain an energetic life.

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The Cane Sugar vs. Corn Sugar Debate

What's better for you? Cane sugar or high fructose corn syrup? And what don't those pesky corn suppliers want you to know? The answer lies in moderation.

If you have an out-of-control sweet tooth, don't get too overwhelmed or beat yourself up for your eating habits. Realize you're not alone. In fact, the more sugar you digest, the more your body craves it. If you want to blame the obesity epidemic on corn growers, you won't be too far off base (of course, that's just a grand simplification of the truth).

The problem with high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is . . . well, there are endless problems! Until recently, who knew that high fructose corn syrup could actually scar your artery walls? Or that high fructose corn syrup could cause heart failure? Who could imagine that the more high fructose corn syrup you eat causes a reaction in your hormones to act as though you're never full, which correlates to overeating and obesity?

Here's how the politics of how HFCS works, so that you're never left scratching your head about its widespread popularity again:

- **It rose in popularity in the 1970s, when sugar became more expensive for farmers to produce.** Right around the time when Americans began to develop a national overweight problem (which has now contributed to an obesity epidemic), high fructose corn syrup became part of virtually everything in the Western diet – bread, crackers, sauce, soups and pre-packaged snacks.

This is because it was cheaper for corn growers to produce (and they produced it from subsidized corn). The cheaper they can produce HFCS, the more money they make, and the more addicted consumers become. The big question should be: Did any of us stand a chance not to become addicted to the stuff?

- **It's not just about quality of HFCS; it's the quantity.** Ultimately, if you eat too much of any one food, it's not good for you. Even if you consumed a small

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amount of high fructose corn syrup, it would be ok. So why is everyone up in arms in protest about the stuff? Because it's everywhere, and it's in everything – not just sweets.

High fructose corn syrup has made its way into burgers, spaghetti sauce, granola, fiber bars, mixed nuts, pre-packaged pasta, soups, salad dressing, coffee drinks, muffins, and your favorite meal at your favorite restaurant. It's everywhere, and it's a major reason why you can't get rid of your protruding waistline.

- **Sugar growers are targeting our children.** Accepting the truth about what we're eating – and the sugar that's in it – is one thing. But what about what food manufacturers are doing to our children?

The cycle is fierce, and it runs quickly and continuously through America's communities: pour the sugar into children's drinks (even those fruit juices that say "no sugar added"), and get them hooked from an early age. The earlier in life someone can become addicted to sugar, the more money the HFCS manufacturers stand to make from their lifelong addiction.

So let's get real here. Let's start making a difference in our food choices and take back control in our family's lives – starting with what goes in your mouth.

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How Much Sugar is Too Much?

Since sugar is in virtually every type of food, it's important to know how much and what kinds are allowed. What can you consume safely, and what counts as way too much?

Here's the recommendation for a healthy body and mind; so listen up!

Women should drink and eat no more than 6 teaspoons (20 g) of sugar, or 100 calories' worth per day.

Men should drink and eat no more than 9 teaspoons (45 g) of sugar, or 150 calories' worth per day.

Sugar is everywhere – from salty snacks and fast food to dairy and fruit. So what's ok for a healthy, active individual to digest? A 20-ounce soda contains roughly 17 spoonfuls of sugar, which can easily be consumed in an hour and already goes over the recommended daily sugar intake – so monitor your sugar carefully, and don't reach for sugary drinks!

Many teenagers and adults consume sodas and sports drinks like water. But have just one soda a day, and you've surpassed your daily sugar recommendation – in fact, you've more than tripled it. That's quite a jump from the days of our hunter and gatherer ancestors, who consumed roughly 20 teaspoons of sugar in a year.

According to the American Heart Association, it's recommended not to take in any more than 40 grams of sugar a day. Luckily, that's not including sugar found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. So, when it comes to those vitamin-rich foods, eat up!

The 40 grams refers to added sugar, which can easily be found in carbonated sodas, chips, crackers, soups, frozen meals and pre-packaged foods (even dairy).

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Decoding the Sugar Label

If you want to lose weight, become healthier, have more energy, and altogether kick your sugar addiction to the curb, try a new and improved way to get the results you want – by decoding the nutrition label.

No matter who is to blame for the atrocious amount of sugar that's in our food, it's up to you to end your personal sugar addiction.

There's a real art to the design of food labels, and it's necessary for those sugar manufactures and growers to make as much money as possible off of their products. That's why, as crafty as they are, they have found multiple names for sugar. Think you're diligently looking for the sugar content in a bag of chips, a loaf of bread or your favorite low-cal cookies? Think again.

- **Outsmart the label.** If you're simply looking for how many grams of sugar a box of crackers or chips contains, you're settling yourself back . . . way back. That won't do you a bit of good if what you're concerned about is natural sugar in the ingredients vs. added sugar in the form of syrup, refined sugar, etc.

Sugar has many names which the manufacturer loves to throw in to throw you off. Look for the following terms on your nutritional label to spot added sugar: high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, glucose, fructose, sucrose, concentrated juices, galactose, honey, agave nectar and sorghum.

- **Pay attention to added sugar.** Everything has sugar in it, for the most part. From apples to potatoes, natural sugars are what your body needs to store energy properly. *Added sugars* are the manufactured toxins that can cause high blood pressure, diabetes and even liver cancer (among other health concerns). Before buying anything, read the label to search for those hidden sugars.
- **Fast food and convenience foods are always loaded with artificial sugars.** Each fast food chain may rival one another, but they do have one thing in

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common – their foods are loaded with carbs, fat, salt and . . . sugar. Even those French fries? Yep. Cheeseburger? Oh yeah. What about the ‘healthy’ grilled chicken sandwich? Yep, even that one.

The premise (and attraction) of fast food is to make it cheap, make it in minutes, and make it taste good going down. What do they care what happens to your body after you’ve purchased another happy meal for your child, or a super-size meal for yourself?

And if you’re to be lured into their drive-thru on the way home from work, they’ve got to make their hamburger patties bigger and juicier than the competition. Lacing sugar into their food does the trick. Hook, line and sinker – they’ve got you just where they want you, but at the expense of your health.

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The 10 Most Common Foods Filled With Sugar (That You'd Never Suspect)

Sugar is everywhere – as you know by now – but here's the kicker: It's also in the foods you'd swear were chock full of only good, nutritious ingredients. Read on to become an expert commander in the war on sugar, gaining the powerful tool of knowledge so you'll understand what to steer clear of in the grocery store.

- **Sports drinks.** The typical 12-ounce sports drink (no matter what the brand may be) contains 21 grams of sugar. You'll see this beverage at every little league game in the world. Fueling up your sons and daughters with this stuff may contribute to hyperactive disorder and even eczema, the uncomfortable dry skin disorder. Worth guzzling it over water? Probably not – at least not on a daily basis.
- **Protein bars.** Protein bars have become a popular trend because they offer a convenient way to get your fill of fiber and protein. The problem is, their persuasive marketing campaigns and athlete endorsements have made it difficult for the average consumer to understand just how much sugar is in one little bar. The truth? Some brands contain 20 or 30 grams of sugar! Research protein bars beforehand so you're not duping yourself into thinking a gimmicky candy bar is good for you.
- **Bran muffins.** This item may look like the healthiest option at your favorite bakery or coffeehouse, but think again. The average bran muffin (although it contains fiber) also contains 40 grams of sugar! And that's not to mention the mass amount of fat, usually in the form of butter or vegetable oil.

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Try taking in some oatmeal topped with nuts instead. If you truly love bran muffins, consider baking them at home, where you have more control over the ingredients. Muffins *can* be made healthy, but stay far away from the preservative-packed processed varieties – especially the ones big enough to contain nearly a whole day's calories!

- **Spaghetti sauce.** If you're saucy – that is, if you love a mountain of sauce with your pasta – be careful. Some of the biggest and most common brands of canned tomato sauce contain 10 grams of sugar. And that's just in half a cup! Consider whipping up a healthier alternative: Dice whole tomatoes, and sauté with olive oil along with your favorite seasonings for taste. You'll drastically reduce your sugar intake and feel confident in your ability to resist the convenient temptation of jarred spaghetti sauce.
- **Sweet tea.** If you thought soda was bad, consider the average 20-ounce bottle of sweet tea. It contains a whopping 59 grams of sugar. For women, that equals three days' sugar allotment!
- **BBQ Sauce.** You probably don't think of condiments as health food, but I bet you didn't know they all contain a big dose of sugar. Is one tablespoon of BBQ sauce – which amounts to 6 grams of sugar – worth it? You be the judge. And yes, ketchup is just as bad! A little added flavor in the form of BBQ sauce on your burger, plus a big squeeze of ketchup to go with your French fries, can contain all the sugar you should eat that day.
- **Soda.** This isn't a surprise, but important to be aware of. It doesn't matter if you're drinking a can of a name-brand soda or a generic one. The grams of sugar add up the same way no matter who manufactured it, and all that sugar is absorbed as fat into your body.

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Drink a 12-ounce soda, and you'll be soaking up 36–46 grams of sugar. Digest a 20-ounce bottle, and you're consuming 65–75 grams of sugar. Drink one bottle a day during your lifetime, and you'll risk the following: obesity, diabetes, low (or "bad") cholesterol; dementia, "fatty" liver, and dozens of added pounds to your frame.

- **"Diet" Deserts.** The diet industry is brilliant at what they do. They can create products that tastes relatively the same, with half the amount of fat and/or calories. But no matter how the diet version stacks up against the original, both are loaded with sugar. Take the typical low-cal, low-fat frozen yogurt. It contains nearly 17–20 grams of sugar for just one serving – that's only a half cup, which means to calculate the sugar in a whole pint you have to multiply that by 4!
- **Canned Fruit.** All fruit contains sugar, but canned fruit contains added sugar, whereas a fresh handful of strawberries or a banana does not. Consider just one piece of canned pineapple. It's delicious and cheap, right? As it turns out, a canned slice of pineapple contains 17 grams of sugar! Similarly, a small cup of fruit cocktail contains 14 grams of sugar. Instead, cut up fruit on your day off to make a big salad you can enjoy over the next few days.
- **Organic juice.** These items – especially the ones that claim there is no sugar added – fool the consumer, easily and quickly. No sugar added simply means that it's not stuffed to the brim with added sugar after the sugar from the fruit has been factored in.

It's tricky business, but here are the facts: Just one pouch of 100% juice for your children with "no sugar added" still equals 25 grams. If you struggle with ways to allow your family to have tasty beverages without all that sugar, make juice a

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treat, not a common occurrence. Just as anything in life goes, enjoy everything in moderation.

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Kick the Sugar Habit to Take Back Your Health

Regardless what you currently weigh, how much of a risk you are for diabetes, or how desperately you want to get rid of the excess sugar in your life, you can take back the control. Regardless of your past eating habits, you're in the driver's seat now. So get your hand out of the cookie jar! Apply the following tips to consume less sugar and, as a result, enjoy greater energy, health and wellness for life!

- **You don't have to go cold turkey to reduce your risk for diabetes or obesity.** If you're trying to come off a sugar high from the last decade (or, let's be honest, more) the first thing to realize is, just like any drug, it's not smart or realistic to cut yourself off completely. If you do, you're likely to binge eat in the middle of the night to make up for all that you feel you've deprived of in the daytime.

Start slow, and commit to giving up one thing a week. If you are used to drinking two sodas a day, drop it down to one a day. Once you've accomplished that, go down to three sodas a week, working toward one a week.

Pick a food item that has been a staple in your life. It could be going to your favorite fast food restaurant on your way home from work, or munching on cookies while watching a movie on the weekend. Whatever it is that has been a regular part of your diet, say goodbye to it. Remember what all that sugar is doing to your body.

How will you give up the sugar in your life? *By remembering the why.* Why are you letting go of high-sugar foods? Because you respect yourself. You love your body. And you want to live the best life possible.

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- **Focus on a whole food diet (eliminating at least 75 percent of processed foods).** This is simpler than it sounds – eat food that hasn't been processed or put together in a plant, lab or industrial facility. Choose foods that are pure in their natural form. Start by raiding your pantry and refrigerator, and toss or give away anything that is convenient. That's tough, I know, but your body will thank you for it later!

In other words, what foods do you have that are boxed up, jarred or bagged? Chips? Cookies? Pre-packaged frozen entrees? Ready-to-heat soups? Anything that is already prepared and ready for consumption is almost certainly loaded with sugar, which means it's horrible for you – at least in comparison to all the delicious whole food options that could instead be gracing your table.

Take a good look at the nutrition labels on these products that you're used to eating. What secretive terms for sugar has the food supplier used to hide the sugar content? Chances are that by the fifth listed ingredient on much of your processed foods, you'll find high fructose corn syrup, honey and/or glucose.

Sugar is sugar, no matter what the nutritional label is calling it – remember that the next time you're tempted to grab a few cookies or chips. It's not just about a few cookies here and there, or grabbing a fast food meal because you're too tired to cook at home. It's about a whole lot more – from dementia to heart disease, kidney failure to chronic fatigue.

- **It's about repositioning your pantry.** Even though you know what sugar can do to your body, it's still hard to break old habits. They die hard, don't they? Give yourself the opportunity to get ahead of old temptations, and knock that sweet tooth out of the ballpark!

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Start by strategizing with an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach. Don't want to be tempted with sweet treats, leftover birthday cake and soda anymore? Then reposition the items in your refrigerator you no longer end up in a staring match with your guilty pleasure foods.

Think about it. As you open up your refrigerator or pantry, where do your eyes dart first? Front and center. Studies show that when you're hungry, you'll go for what you see first, and that's what is right in front of you.

It's a survival mechanism not to search out the entire fridge or pantry before making up your mind. So don't! Use this to your advantage. To hack your fridge, place the healthy fruits, vegetables, leftover whole grain pasta and last night's stir-fry in the front area of your vision. Place other items (a sweet treat for later) in the back, or away to the left or right – out of harm's way.

- **Drink coffee with cream only (ditch the sugary syrup).** Have one cup of black coffee in the morning, and you've got yourself a natural metabolism booster – a perfect partner to help you accomplish your weight-loss goals. But load your coffee up with sugar and cream daily, and you'll see your waistline expand. If you need to have something in your coffee, consider putting a few drops of honey and a splash of cream.

If you want to cut down your sugar intake, there's no smarter place to start than with those drinkable calories that are currently sabotaging your efforts to be healthier. Start by committing to one cup of black coffee a day, during the weekday. When the weekend comes, give yourself a Saturday morning treat of your favorite flavored latte so you don't feel deprived.

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- **Search out natural sugar to satisfy your sweet tooth.** It may be difficult to do in the beginning, but healthier sugar options are available to you. They may not be as sweet as the high fructose corn syrup you're used to digesting – but your improved health is worth the effort to turn to the whole foods that are from the earth, rather than mindlessly chomping away on foods that are stuffed with chemicals, developed in a manufacturing plant.

Grab an apple on the go. For a sweet treat, add a small package of Stevia to a bowl of fruit or oatmeal.

- **Swap out dessert for gum.** Sometimes, you can't seem to control your sweet tooth (despite being informed about what sugar is and does to your body). When a bad craving hits, it's better to chew a stick of gum – in order to forgo that piece of pie.

Chewing gum has made its way into grocery stores, gas stations, vending machines and 24-hour convenience stores. With well over fifty flavors and varieties, you have your pick – just make sure to check the sugar or artificial sweetener content before purchasing!

- **Visualize your health goals.** As you learn how to limit your sugar intake (soon enough your sugar craving will be a part of your past), you'll find that one of the most powerful tools to stay away from the manufactured stuff is the tool you've always had at your disposal: your mind. So, use it to the fullest!

If you have an active imagination, you already have the power to live a sugar-free life. Visualization – the practice of mentally visiting a peaceful place with positive images to de-stress and refocus your attention on your goals – has the capability

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to be transformative. Envision how you can change your life, especially your eating habits, and it will be that much easier to take the steps in reality.

When you have an out-of-control sweet tooth, there's no time like the present to refocus your energy on a beach, a hike in the woods, or even that blissful spot you spent your childhood in. Here's a simple visualization you can use to regain control.

Close your eyes, and feel what it's like to be in that space. If you're at the beach, practice feeling your toes dig into the sand, and feel the hot sun beating down on your back. Wherever this place of peace and bliss is, think about what's around you. Are you alone, or surrounded by friends and family? What do you smell? Taste? Touch?

Now, take this visualization one step forward. Leave the place you are at, and arrive in an empty room, where there isn't anything but a chair and table for your use. Sit in the chair, and breathe in deeply. Exhale out deeply. On the table in front of you, you see that there is an apple, a wonderful stir-fry (loaded with your favorite vegetables and sauce) and a tall glass of refreshing water.

Take a sip of the water, and feel how it coats your throat and trickles into your stomach. As it does, enjoy the sensation of this glass of water nurturing your body and replenishing your organs. Now take a bite of that delicious stir-fry dish, and bite into the broccoli, green beans, lean cuts of meat or tofu, and whole grain noodles or brown rice. For a sweet end to your meal, take a bite of the most refreshing, crisp and juicy apple you've ever had and enjoy the moment of mindfully eating bite after bite.

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As you eat this delicious meal, you begin to remember how good you feel with the food you're blessed to have in your life, and how eating right can heal your body.

Now, breathe in and out once more. Open your eyes, and focus on the previous temptation for sugar. Chances are, when you visualize the state of mind that you want to arrive at, you will immediately have a renewed perspective that will distract you from the sweets that used to take over your life.

With practice, visualizations can help you to overcome any obstacle in your life – stress, money, love, lifelong dreams, bad habits and comfort food. It's endless what visualizations can do to improve your state of mind, and when you conquer your mind, you can conquer the foods that harm it.

- **Start your day off with whole grains and protein.** Sugar doesn't offer fiber, protein or the other nutrients that your body needs to perform at its best. Beat your sweet tooth to the punch by fueling your day (and especially your morning) with plenty of protein, fiber and complex carbs.

If you've ever gotten into the habit of skipping breakfast, there's a reason that by lunchtime your appetite for sugar is at an all-time high. Your body is signaling that your blood sugar is low, and it's headed into survival mode.

Similar to the days of our hunter and gatherer ancestors, who may have gone through a dry patch and spent an entire day without food, hunger makes us grab anything in sight. But it's not just calories your body craves; same goes when you've gone so long without nutrition in your system. You'll grab anything that looks tasty, and you're especially on the hunt for sugar-packed crackers, cookies, chips or a super-sized meal.

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Don't keep letting the pattern of bad eating control you. Instead, start your morning with scrambled eggs, veggies, a piece of whole grain toast topped with natural almond butter, or a whole grain cereal (with a minimal amount of sugar, of course!). No time in the morning? At least grab a piece of fruit and a handful of nuts. Just try this tip for a week, and see how much your usual midday sugar attacks lessen.

- **Prioritize your sugar.** Just like you prioritize your workload at the start of each week, it's fundamental to prioritize your sugar intake. What's most important to you: managing the stress of your responsibilities, or decreasing the stress that excess sugar intake is putting on your body?

Spend one day being conscious of everything you eat, writing down every meal, snack and bite of food you sneak. Don't forget to count the frozen coffee drink you consume on your way to work, the salad dressing on your lettuce at lunch, the cookies you munch on during a 3 pm energy slump, and the handful of trail mix you enjoyed while cooking dinner. And how about dessert? Make sure to write everything down, because if you don't, you're not cheating anyone but yourself!

The next morning, spend a few minutes looking over your list. Chances are, you probably eat more throughout a normal day than you thought. And, chances are good that whatever you're eating, it's packed with sugar. Go through your pantry and read the nutrition labels off of each box, jar and chocolate bar you depend on.

Tallying it all up can be daunting, but here's the part where you take back control of your diet. Prioritize the foods that are most important to you. Right now, in this moment, what can't you imagine living without? This step is about being realistic.

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Getting rid of all sugar is impossible, so do your best to choose only what's most important to you, and don't beat yourself up for what you can't kiss goodbye.

Does your hazelnut latte contribute to a happy and productive morning, every morning? Great. Don't give it up completely, but instead, give yourself a reward of a delicious hazelnut latte every Friday. Then, keep the other mornings simple with black coffee and just a touch of cream.

Can you do without your latte every morning, but can't imagine getting through lunchtime without your favorite sweet salad dressing? Or perhaps you love French fries and a cheeseburger on the weekend as your go-to comfort food? That's ok; you're allowed one food vice (or maybe two). As long as you cut down on the other sugary, empty-calorie treat throughout the week, you'll be headed in the right direction.

- **Search out low-sugar breakfast cereals.** Scan the breakfast aisle at your local grocery store, and this is what you'll find – nearly 50 versions of the same sugar-infused breakfast cereal, cereal bars and even oatmeal.

Look at the nutritional profiles of each breakfast item, and you will undoubtedly find the terms high fructose corn syrup, honey, fructose, sucrose and a dozen other names masking what the primary ingredient is – sugar.

As mentioned before, if you start your day fueled up with protein, fiber and whole grains, you'll be less likely to reach for a late morning or early afternoon sugary snack. Spend some time searching out the best options in breakfast fare. Instant oatmeal is a great choice – as long as it doesn't come along with brown sugar and dried fruit.

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Buy oatmeal as plain oats, and add some unsalted nuts with a small helping of dried fruit (if needed). Need a sweeter addition to your oats? Dabble a conservative amount of raw local honey on top – it's sweet, and it's natural. And, it will do your body more good than any of the pre-packaged oatmeal will ever do.

If you don't care for oatmeal, survey the whole grain cereals your grocery store offers. There are many varieties – from granola to oat bran, and with some time and attention spent during your next trip there, you'll see that many offer less calories and less sugar than the more expensive, bigger name brands do. Just be careful to know that “natural” and “healthy” don't always mean low-sugar!

- **Eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day.** Eating three large meals during the day doesn't always help you lose weight or feel better, does it? Is your appetite kept in check, or do you still have the urge to munch on comfort foods?

When you commit to eating 5–6 small meals throughout the day and night, you do yourself one huge favor: allow your blood sugar to stay stable. That means the late-night cravings will cease, and you even create motivation to continue eating in a way that won't give you that stuffed-to-the-brim feeling.

When you have many tasks to accomplish, one of the biggest deterrents to staying productive and on task is a full belly. It can create poor concentration, fatigue, and a decrease in your mood.

Who can stay motivated after a heavy meal when all they want to do is go to sleep? That never works. Energizing food throughout your day (in smaller portions) will work to keep your eyes, ears, and brain fully charged and ready to go.

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Swap out the big lunch and big dinner for protein-rich choices throughout your day, and keep your energy strong – right up until bedtime. Not sure what those smart food choices are, exactly? The options for healthy eating are nearly limitless. Here are just a few:

- Yogurt and berries
 - Whole grain bread with lean cuts of meat
 - A platter of your favorite veggies and dip
 - Apples and peanut butter
 - Tea or a small glass of fresh-squeezed juice
 - Protein shakes
 - Dried fruit
 - Unsalted almonds
 - A few crackers with cheese
 - Scrambled eggs
 - Quiche loaded with vegetables and spinach
- **Skip the fruity cocktails, and opt for a beer instead.** Who doesn't love a good happy hour? But next time you're out on the town, remember this: Just one of those fun, flirty cocktails will surpass your daily 40 grams of sugar in a heartbeat. They may be delicious, but if that describes your regular go-to drink, think again.

Over time, it could lead to obesity, and let's face it – you take pride in your body. Instead of a fruity cocktail, treat your mixed drinks like you treat your other sugary temptations: enjoy in extreme moderation. If you must have a sweet cocktail, limit yourself to one a week, or one a month.

When you want a drink during the week to unwind, or while out with friends, opt for red wine (which has less sugar in it than white wine) or beer. Be open to

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trying something new; chances are there's a drink out there with your name on it, and one that you'll love just as much as those fun, fancy cocktails.

Another tip to try after a drink – wash it down with a glass of water. That will help your body wash out the sugar from your system, and keep you alert for the rest of your week.

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Your 28-Day Sugar Detox

Creating the sugar-free, happy life you want to want takes time, patience, devotion and some hard work. Let's face it – you've got a lot of refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup to detox from, plus a stubborn mind that wants more of it!

Sugar is an addiction, and like any addiction, it requires a plan of action. Follow this guide to sugar detox, and pretty soon, your dependency on the sweet stuff will feel like a phase of your past – not your present.

- **Realize it takes 28 days to detox from any addiction.** There's no race to the sugar-free finish line so take it slow. Realize that consistent steps towards progress is the smartest move you can make for the healthiest life possible.

As with any big habit change, give yourself 28 whole days to make the switch. Getting the sugar bug out of your system takes time. Sugar is powerful, and the effect it has on your body is working in many ways to keep you hooked.

Apply the tips as outlined in this book to decrease your weekly sugar intake, and before long it will feel natural to go without – trust me on this one. As a result, you will finally have the upper-hand over sugar, as opposed to being at this little chemical's mercy.

- **Read the nutrition labels.** Now you know what secretive language food suppliers use for the word "sugar." You're one step ahead of the vicious cycle that sugar and corn growers have ensnared consumers in. Before buying any new product, look for terms such as "high fructose corn syrup," "sucrose," "glucose," "honey," "dextrose," and "concentrated juices."

Adopt this one healthy-eating habit, and you won't just detox from sugar correctly; you'll see the pounds drop off your waistline.

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- **Eat more complex carbs.** Avoid simple carbs and sugar at all costs (cookies, pizza, burgers, chips, etc.), and replace that caloric intake with complex carbs (steel oats, spinach, soybeans, potatoes, broccoli, black beans, oranges). The difference is the latter takes a lot longer for your body to break down, keeping you from a nasty sugar crash.
- **Get moving.** Are you pre-diabetic, diabetic, obese, or fearful of becoming any of the above? The single best thing you can do (besides eating right and reducing your sugar intake) is exercise. The American Heart Association suggests exercising at a moderate pace at least three times a week at thirty-minute intervals.

Walk, run, skip, dance, swim or bike ride your way to good health and longevity. Skip the workouts, however, and you'll remain where you have always been – growing in risk for a wide range of mental and physical health scares.

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Recap: The Bittersweet Truth about Sugar

Sugar isn't so sweet anymore, is it? Is it now leaving a bitter taste in your mouth?

Perhaps you've heard the many disadvantages of sugar before, or you've just read the startling facts about what added sugar can do for you for the first time. It doesn't matter if you've enjoyed cupcake after cupcake in ignorant bliss, or you've known better for years but have done nothing to change your eating habits.

Now is the time to change, and this moment is all you have. Be smart about your daily sugar intake (no more than 40 grams of sugar a day), and take control over your mental and physical health.

You have the information, but what you do with it is up to you.

Before you let sugar addiction hold you hostage another day, consider this: How amazingly healthy, liberated and illness-resistant will you be without depending on sugar to dictate your energy level and mood?

With small changes in your life today, you can finally conquer your sugar habit and become in control of your weight, your mood, your future, and your total wellness. It's up to you to make your life prosperous, healthy and sugar-free to reap the endless amount of benefits a well-balanced diet will give you!

Recommended Recipes

Are you ready to transform your diet and reap unlimited benefits from eating the way nature intended? The Paleo diet may be exactly what you've been looking for.

Ready to . . .

- Lose weight
- Ignite your energy levels
- Improve digestion

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- Eliminate comfort food cravings
- Build muscle mass faster

It's time to try the Paleo diet. Sometimes known as the caveman diet, this plan eliminates heavily processed foods and focuses on whole foods that nourish your body and help you gain maximum health.

On the Paleo diet, you'll swap out harmful processed foods and refined carbs for beef, chicken, fish, eggs, vegetables, oils, nuts and fruits.

In short, with the Paleo diet, you eat the way nature intended, thus avoiding all the processed junk and sugar-laced temptations.

The benefits of this lifestyle are plentiful, but some followers initially find the food selection limited. That's why Nikki Young created Paleo Cookbooks. They're bursting with delicious and nutritious recipes that make sticking to this diet a breeze.

Even if you love cake, spaghetti, chocolate, and sandwiches, you can stick to the Paleo diet using these recipes. Imagine a diet that helps you lose weight, gain better health AND lets you eat desserts!

Check out the Paleo Cookbook now:

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