



Avoid These Foods to Minimize Sugar

- Sweetened beverages
- Soda, juices, coffee drinks, sports drinks
- Snack foods
- Chips, cookies, pastries, most bars
- Most breakfast cereals
- Dry cereals and flavored oatmeal
- Dairy products
- Flavored yogurt, coffee creamer, flavored milk
- Bread, donuts, cake, muffins and other baked goods
- Condiments and sauces
- Ketchup, barbeque sauces, tomato sauce and salad dressings
- Anything food labeled no-fat or low-fat

CONTACT US

Chef Marshall O'Brien Group
612-460-5342
info@chefmarshallobrien.com
chefmarshallobrien.com

How to Reduce the Amount of Sugar in Your Diet

From birth, we are programmed to associate sweet foods with comfort and nurturing. Although most of us know consuming too much sugar leads to health risks like obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease, we are surrounded with highly processed, sweetened foods, so it is no wonder we have a hard time setting limits or saying no. Understanding how your body responds to sugar can help you get over the guilt and take steps to successfully break your sugar habit without giving up on enjoying treats in moderation.

Chronic Inflammation and Sugar

Chronic diseases account for eighty percent of all deaths in America and the primary reason we have a reduced quality of life is chronic illnesses like heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease. These diseases are caused by chronic inflammation, which is primarily caused by sugar. Sugar is now considered to be the single most toxic ingredient in the modern diet.

Sugar – As Addictive as Cocaine?

Have you ever wondered why you crave sweet foods? Consuming sugar activates the same brain circuitry involved in addiction to drugs like cocaine. Sugar induces reward and pleasure, alters mood, produces cravings and may elicit biochemical signs of withdrawal in the brain – all characteristics of an addictive substance.

Sugar Dampens the Stress Response

It turns out there is a biological reason we reach for that box of cookies when we are stressed. Recent research shows that consuming sugar helps turn off the body's stress response, leading to less stress-induced cortisol. This is trading one bad situation for another!

Eat Less, Taste More

Regularly consuming sugar decreases your ability to taste sweetness, meaning you need to eat more to get the same sweet taste. The good news is by reducing your sugar consumption over time you can 'retrain' your taste buds to become more sensitive to sugar.

How Much Sugar Should You Have Each Day?

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends consuming no more than 24 grams of sugar per day for women and children and 36 grams per day for men. The average American consumes three to four times that amount. Most Americans have exceeded their daily recommended amount of sugar by the time they finish breakfast.

Where Do We Get Most of Our Sugar?

For the average American, half of their daily sugar intake comes from liquid calories. Work to first minimize, and then eliminate soda, specialty coffee drinks, juices, sweetened teas and flavored milk. With most of these beverages, you will get more than your daily sugar allowance with one serving and may easily get two to three times your recommended daily amount.

Next, look at processed foods and fast foods. Over 80% of all processed foods and fast foods have added sugar. You will want to start switching to real food. In addition to having lower amounts of sugar, the fiber in real food greatly slows down the absorption of the sugar in these foods.

Start to eliminate candy, baked goods, and most snack bars. Switch from regular pasta, bread and white rice to whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta and brown or wild rice. Also look carefully at the sugar in most breakfast cereals. Food products marketed as “no fat” or “low fat” usually contain significant added sugar.

Most dairy products are very high in natural sugar and contain some added sugars, so you will want to minimize these foods as well. Most yogurt with fruit or flavoring gives you your daily amount of sugar in only one small serving.

Salad dressing, condiments, dips and sauces are loaded with added sugar. It is simple and quick to learn to make your own dressings and sauces.

Artificial Sweeteners Are Not the Solution

Switching to foods and beverages with artificial sweeteners sounds like a simple solution but it is not the right decision. When the brain thinks it is getting sugar and then finds out it did not, it activates your craving for processed foods that have added sugar in them.

Break the Sugar Habit

These simple steps allow you to break your sugar habit so you can enjoy sweets in moderation without cravings or guilt.

- Train your taste buds – Reduce the amount of sugar in your food. After several weeks of eating less sugar, you will become more sensitive to sweetness – and can eat less without noticing a difference in taste.

- Replace the sugar in your food with natural sweeteners. Fruits and certain spices, like cinnamon and vanilla, lend natural sweetness to foods, helping you cut back on sugar without giving up on taste.
- Exercise regularly – Recent research suggests cardiovascular exercise increases self-control and helps you resist cravings, leading to smarter food choices.
- Outlast your cravings – Cravings only last about 15 minutes, so distract yourself with a quick walk or a glass of water to avoid giving in.
- Eat foods rich in fiber and healthy fats – Foods like olive oil, nuts and avocados help keep your blood sugar steady and stop cravings in their tracks.
- Get enough sleep – You are more likely to crave sugar and cave to cravings when you are sleep deprived.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners – Artificial sweeteners cause intestinal distress and may alter the way your body metabolizes sugar, causing confusion between the gut and the brain. And since you are still eating sweet foods, you will continue to have sweet cravings.

Conclusion

When you understand the biochemical effects of eating sugar and where you are getting most of your sugar, you can stop beating yourself up over a lack of willpower and start taking steps to enjoy treats on your own terms.

Train your taste buds and use natural sweeteners to reduce the sugar in your food without compromising flavor. Eat a diet rich in healthy fats and fiber and get regular exercise and adequate sleep to stop cravings in their tracks. These simple steps help you reduce your sugar intake without giving up the pleasure of enjoying sweets in moderation.