

Top Ten Sugar Craving Strategies

The following could be individual or collective reasons for sugar cravings. Read each suggestion and notice how it applies to your eating or lifestyle. Reducing your desire or addiction for sugar should not require Herculean will power. Becoming conscious of the physiological and lifestyle factors that stimulate sugar cravings should make taming your sweet tooth a piece of cake--so to speak.

1. REDUCE SALT & PRODUCTS WITH SALT

The need for dietary salt from natural sources (sun-dried sea salt) is dependent on several factors; a lack of salt can cause fatigue, stimulate a desire to overeat and often result in a craving for animal protein. However, with the availability of good quality sea salt, miso paste, tamari soy sauce and natural pickles, it's quite easy to overdose. Thirst and a craving for sweet foods is one of the most reliable indicators of excess dietary salt.

2. REDUCE ANIMAL PROTEIN

The standard four basic food group propaganda was force-fed to the American public along with the myth that animal protein should be a dietary staple. The meat and potatoes mentality has to re-think its philosophy since established research shows excess animal protein can lead to colon and prostate cancer. If this applies to you eat less in volume (2 to 4 ounce servings) and limit it to three to four times per week (maximum), as opposed to daily.

3. REDUCE FOOD VOLUME

Overeating leads to fatigue and sluggishness. This makes a stimulant like sugar (or coffee) more appealing. Eating more frequently will allow you to reduce overeating with a minimum of effort.

4. EAT MORE FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

One of the most common reasons for sugar cravings--especially at night. By skipping meals or waiting long periods you stop supplying your blood with glucose. The blood sugar drops and by the time you finally get around to eating, you're going nuts for simple sugar. You're also likely to end up overeating or craving something fatty as a compensation for sugar. Initially, don't wait more than 3 1/2 to 4 hours between meals.

5. AVOID EATING PRIOR TO BED

If your body's digesting when it requires much needed rest, you'll require more sleep, dream excessively and find it difficult awakening with alertness. Good deep sleep will result in wide-awake days. Eating too close to bedtime creates a groggy awakening craving the stimulation of sugar (or caffeine) the following morning. Eat a light evening dinner at least 2 1/2 to three hours before retiring.

6. AVOID SUGAR

This might sound obvious, however, continuing to eat simple sugars results in a falling blood sugar. This stimulates a need for more sugar and the cycle continues. Even though fruit is a

simple sugar, switching to fruit instead of sugar is a good first step. Eat the skin of the fruit as well since fiber slows blood sugar elevation.

7. EXERCISE MODERATELY, BUT CONSISTENTLY

Daily aerobic exercise will increase circulation and strengthen will power. Brisk walking, biking, light jogging, etc. naturally increases sensitivity to the effects of sugar. Try to get 20 to 30 minutes of some type of pleasurable exercise at least 5 times per week. Enjoy this. It should not be a chore.

8. EMPHASIZE NATURAL WHOLE COMPLEX-CARBOHYDRATES

If your daily diet includes whole grains (brown rice, oats, millet, barley, etc.), vegetables (roots, greens and round vegetables such as squashes, cabbages, etc.) as a primary fuel, you'll find you automatically crave less sugar. Emphasizing sweet vegetables such as carrots, cooked onions, corn, cabbage, parsnips, squashes, etc., adds a natural sweetness to meals. Introduce some sea vegetables (aka "seaweeds") for much needed minerals to enrich blood.

9. DON'T SUPPRESS FEELINGS

This doesn't mean you have to broadcast every feeling--only those that matter and to those who really matter to you. Food indulgence, especially with sweets, is a convenient way to anesthetize feelings. Sugar can consume you with sensory pleasure, temporarily providing mental relief from whatever might be stressful. However, sweets can hinder energy levels and mental clarity so in the long run your emotional coping ability becomes compromised.

10. BEWARE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRIGGERS

The many psychological associations we connect with food have a powerful influence. Beware of family associations, movie rituals, familiar restaurants, childhood habits, etc.

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