

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

The not-so-sweet truth about sugar

Need a sugar fix? Sugar gives you a quick burst of energy, and wow, it feels good. But the next thing you know, you're craving something sweet again. No one knows for sure if sugar is addictive, but the sugar habit can certainly be hard to quit.

Is sugar dragging you down? When you fill up on foods and beverages loaded with sugar, there's less room in your diet for the nutrition your body needs. But empty calories and extra pounds aren't the only risks. Sugar has been linked to diseases such as heart disease, cancer and obesity.^{1,2}

What sugars should you cut back on? *Added sugars* or *refined sugars* are the bad guys. They're added to processed foods and beverages. You'll find many different names for added sugars on ingredient labels, including corn syrup, dextrose, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose and others. *Naturally occurring sugars* are found naturally in fruit and milk. These sugars are OK (unless you're on a special diet).

Ready to reverse the sugar effect? You might not be surprised to learn that cutting back on sugar can help you lose weight and keep your smile glowing. But quitting the sugar habit can help your health in other ways, too.

Sources:

1. American Heart Association. "Added Sugars Add to Your Risk of Dying from Heart Disease." http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Added-Sugars-Add-to-Your-Risk-of-Dying-from-Heart-Disease_UCM_460319_Article.jsp (accessed April 15, 2014)
2. ScienceDaily. "Excess sugar linked to cancer." Feb. 1, 2013. Accessed April 15, 2014. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/02/130201100149.htm>
3. UCLA Department of Neurosurgery. "UCLA study shows high-fructose diet sabotages learning, memory." May 15, 2012. <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/this-is-your-brain-on-sugar-ucla-233992> (accessed April 15, 2014)

This is intended to be general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice prior to undertaking a new diet or exercise program.



- **Healthy heart.** Do candy hearts make you happy? Don't be fooled. Your heart does not love sugar. Added sugars are linked with high blood pressure, high cholesterol and higher risk for heart disease.¹ Remember, foods that are low-fat are not heart-healthy if they are loaded with sugar.
- **Healthy brain.** What happens to your brain "on sugar"? One animal study suggested that a high-fructose diet over the long term can slow the brain and disrupt learning and memory.³ Avoid brain fog and stay energized when you eat healthy, well-balanced, low-sugar meals.

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