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Sugar Addiction: How to Reduce Sugar Intake

9 Steps to Break Your Sugar Habit

Eating too much sugar can wreak havoc on your health. Here's how to determine if your sweet tooth is a problem and what you can do about it

 By Justin Park **fitbie**

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 Teitelbaum, MD, author of *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* Cookbook.

How to Curb Your Sweet Tooth

How can you tell if you have a problem with sugar? Stashing sugary foods and hiding your consumption are obvious red flags, but the best way to check is to cut out refined carbohydrates and added sugars for a few days and see how you feel, says Teitelbaum. If you start to feel anxious, moody, depressed, tired, or unable to give up sugar, you've probably got an unhealthy relationship with it.

If you think you have a problem sugar habit, have no fear. This nine-step plan will get you back on the straight and narrow (no daily meetings required).

Learn how to kick your toxic lifestyle with *The South Beach Wake-Up Call*

1. Start slow. Kathleen DesMaisons, author of *The Sugar Addict's Total Recovery Program*, says quitting "cold turkey" is a recipe for disaster. If you're truly affected by sugar, going cold turkey can cause side effects such as headache and moodiness. "You want to taper off your consumption over time. Cutting out sugar completely should be the last step."

2. Rest up. Aim to get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night. People often turn to sugar for a quick energy fix when they're tired. While the sugar may provide a temporary feel-good energy boost, the body will overreact to all the sugar by producing excess insulin and eventually an energy "crash will follow" which sugar junkies fight by eating more sugar, says Teitelbaum.



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3. Eat a protein-rich breakfast. Refined carbohydrates and added sugars found in many breakfast cereals start your day with that crash-and-burn energy cycle. Instead, try a low-sugar protein smoothie or eggs with some oatmeal to keep your blood sugar steady for lasting energy.

Video: [Make Kids Cereal Healthy](#)

4. Drop the obvious offenders. You don't need a doctor to tell you to avoid the worst sugar culprits. Certain common sugar sources should be the first to go, such as soda, juice, caramel macchiatos, cakes, pie, and candy. If the label says a food has more than 8 g of sugar per serving, set it back down.

5. Look for covert sources of sugar. Refined grains such as the white flour found in breads and pastas, and breakfast cereal, energy bars, and dried fruits are sneaky sources of sugar. The starches in refined grains are so quickly converted into sugar that they end up delivering the same sugar spike as table sugar.

6 Ways to Spot Sneaky Sugars

6. Read nutrition labels. Not sure what numbers you're looking for on the back of that "energy" bar? Take the amount of sugar listed in grams and divide by 4 to find out how many spoonfuls of sugar are in a serving of the product. "No one wants to spend a lifetime counting grams, but if you see that a food has 8 teaspoons of sugar in it, it's easier to decide you don't want to eat it," says Teitelbaum.

7. Eat lunch and dinner. If you skip meals throughout the day, you're setting yourself up for poor food choices later on. Skipping meals can drop your blood sugar and make you so hungry you eat the first thing to cross your plate, rather than take the time to find a quality food choice.

[Lower your blood sugar with this free 2-week eating plan](#)

8. Do it yourself. When meals come from your own kitchen, it's easier to keep sneaky sugars out of your diet. Start by shopping on the outside edges of the grocery store where you usually find whole fruits, veggies, and protein. Focus on foods that aren't packaged to minimize your exposure to added sugars.

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