



HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

8/1: Sugar

This week's health topic is sugar. Next week we will look at something WAY worse - sugar substitutes.



We used to have to forage for sweet foods. No more. Our world is overrun with sugary foods. Obvious culprits are foods like iced donuts and beverages like super-large lattes. However, there are a host of surprising foods from ketchup to salad dressing to marinara sauce that contain lots of added sugar.

Adults should consume no more than 35 g of sugar per day. In one year, the average American will consume an astounding 185 pounds of sugar. This means we eat ½ pound of sugar per day. That is over six times the recommended amount.

Why be sour on sugar?

To say that sugar is bad for your health is a huge understatement. Sugar is far more destructive than most people realize. Here are several reasons why:



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Sugar impairs brain function and is highly addictive.

Sugar has a terrible effect on the brain. When we eat sugar, our body reacts similar to the way the brain reacts to heroin and cocaine.

When sugar hits our tongue, it activates certain taste buds that send a signal to the brain. The signal activates the brain's reward system. Dopamine (a feel-good brain chemical) is released, and the behavior is reinforced, which makes us want to repeat it (mmmm, that's nice, give me more!).



When you repeatedly activate that reward system, your brain adapts and rewires itself. You crave more and more sugar. Research on rats demonstrates this. When they were fed high-sugar diets, the rats' brains released less of a certain chemical that helps bodies put on the brakes. They were less able to stop eating sugar.

Those sugar-saturated rats didn't do too well on certain memory tasks either, indicating that brain functions in the prefrontal area and hippocampus (a key area for memory formation and retention) were impaired. Besides short-term memory, other rat studies showed that a high sugar diet increased inflammation.

Sugar is an inflammatory food.

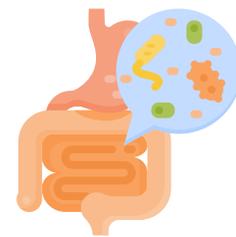
Inflammation is what drives all chronic diseases. Sugar is a highly inflammatory food. People with high sugar diets have more inflammatory markers in their blood. Excessive sugar in the blood bonds abnormally with proteins and carbohydrates and produces AGEs [advanced glycation end products]. AGEs are highly destructive. They are a major cause of oxidative stress, activating genes in our body to produce inflammation.



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Sugar harms a healthy gut.

Our gut microbiome is the vast community of microscopic organisms living in our intestines. The gut microbiome helps control digestion, regulate appetite, modulate mood and emotions, and improve immunity. Sugar destroys good cut bacteria. It is the fertilizer that causes bad bacteria to flourish.



Sugar is fattening.

Foods rich in added sugars tend to be high in calories, which contribute to weight gain. High-sugar diets produce elevated blood sugar and insulin resistance. Both are linked to weight gain and excess body fat. Sugar affects appetite-regulating hormones and reward centers in your brain, which may increase the desire for palatable foods and cause you to overeat.



Sugar contributes to disease.



Consuming too much added sugar increases heart disease risk factors like obesity and high blood pressure. A high-sugar diet may lead to obesity and insulin resistance, both of which are significant risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Eating excessive amounts of sugar may also increase your risk of developing certain cancers.

Next steps

- Read labels with an eagle eye. Almost everything has added sugar.
- Don't load up on artificial sweeteners instead. Next week's topic tells why.
- If you're craving sweets, turn to "nature's candy" - fresh fruit.
- For sound nutritional guidance, turn to Elite. It's not easy to kick the sugar habit, but it can be done. The staff of Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions are devoted to helping clients achieve and maintain good health.

An illustration of a nutrition facts label with a blue background. The label is titled 'Nutrition Facts' and lists various nutrients and their percentages. The text is small and partially obscured by the blue background.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|--|-------------------|
| Serving Size 1 oz. Amount Per Serving | |
| Calories | Calories From Fat |
| % Daily Value* | |
| Total Fat | % |
| Saturated Fat | % |
| Trans Fat | % |
| Cholesterol | % |
| Sodium | % |
| Total Carbohydrate | % |
| Dietary Fiber | % |
| Sugars | % |
| Protein | |

*Percent Daily values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.



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SCAN ME