

Breaking Free for Good From Sugar Addiction

Do you have intense cravings for sugar you often have difficulty controlling? In this article, I'm going to cover seven spiritual and natural secrets for overcoming this addiction. But first, let me give you some background.

When you eat sugar, you raise two neurotransmitters in your brain: serotonin and beta-endorphin. Both these neurotransmitters influence your mood and give you a sense of calm, well-being, comfort and generally make you feel good. This is why many people crave sugar when they're emotionally upset.

However, your blood sugar levels spike too high when you eat sugar, and your body has to release the hormone insulin to bring the blood sugar back into balance. If too much insulin is released, your blood sugar crashes, leaving you tired, irritable, moody and brain-fogged.

For many people, this sets off a daily cycle of blood sugar spikes and crashes as they consume more and more sugar to try to restore those initial feelings of calm and comfort—but it never lasts.

To break free of sugar addiction for good, you first need to address its spiritual and emotional aspects, then its physical aspects. Here are seven ways to do this:

1. Go back to the beginning. For many of us, our attachment to sugar goes back to childhood. In my own situation, I learned to associate sugar with comfort. My mother worked a lot as a single mom, and before she would leave me with the sitter, she always gave me candy money so I could walk to the convenience store around the corner to get a treat. I missed my mother, and I was lonely, but the only comfort I had as a child was

the candy. Eating the candy made me feel better.

Unfortunately, that pattern continued as an adult. Whenever I felt emotionally stressed or upset, I craved candy and other sweets, never realizing I was coping the same way I did when I was 5. Take a moment to think about your own sugar-addiction history. When did sugar become a coping method for you? Chances are, it was during periods of stress or emotional distress.

2. Re-think your coping choices. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 13:11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, and I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things." Remember, a child does not have many options when they experience emotional pain, but adults do. Have compassion on the child/person you used to be, but recognize your way of coping then does not fit you now.

3. Ask God for help. Attempting to deal with emotional pain with food, sugar, sex, drugs or other addiction is like trying to fill a hole that does not have a bottom. No matter what you put into that hole, it will never be enough. The only thing that is big enough to fill the hole is God. Strengthen your relationship with Him through prayer, praise, worship and Bible study. Ask Him to reveal and heal any sources of emotional pain you have and receive that healing by faith.

4. Add more whole foods to your life. Eat high fiber fruits like apples, pears and oranges to satisfy your sweet tooth without the sugar rush. Eating reasonable servings of sweet potatoes, brown rice and whole-grain pasta also helps keep your blood sugar stable and increases the body's natural production of serotonin. Eat plenty of green leafy vegetables and other colorful vegetables to replenish B and C vitamins in your body. These vitamins help your body convert food into energy, but eating large amounts of sugar depletes them. Eating lean sources of protein like chicken, fish, turkey, beans and low-fat dairy products (in moderation) will also

help to curb hunger and cravings.

5. Limit the sugar in your life. If you are sensitive to sugar, change your diet to limit your exposure to it. Otherwise it becomes a case of “the more you get, the more you want.” Learn to read labels. A good guideline is to replace any prepared food or drink that has more than 10 grams of sugar per serving with one that has less sugar. Sugar goes by many names besides the obvious ones (those with sugar or syrup in the name) such as dextrose, fructose, glucose, galactose, sucrose, maltodextrin, barley malt and molasses. If one of these names for sugar is one of the first three ingredients on the label, replace it with something else.

Also, limit your intake of fruit juice to less than one-half cup—fruit juice also raises your blood sugar quickly. Limit your intake of artificially sweetened drinks too, because they can keep your taste for sugar alive. Lastly, limit foods made with white flour and white rice, because the body breaks them down quickly and reacts to them in a similar way as to eating sugar.

6. Make your own feel-good chemicals. I mentioned earlier that eating sugar increases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. There are other natural things you can do that have the same effect:

- **Exercise.** If sugar addiction is a problem for you, I recommend that you exercise for a minimum of 30 minutes most days of the week to make some endorphins. If you aren't exercising at all now, start with 10 minutes a day and work up. But here's a tip: When you're exercising, grin—show your teeth. When you smile, you send an “all is well” signal to your brain, and it releases even more feel-good chemicals. Also, when you give a wide smile, your mouth is open slightly, which increases your oxygen intake when you exercise, making it easier to do. So smile when exercising. I dare you to

put it to the test and see.

- **Sunshine.** Sunshine also increase the body's production of endorphins, so get about 15-20 minutes of sunshine exposure a day if you can.
- **Hugs.** Hug others as much as you can. If you don't have anybody to hug, then hug yourself. The more hugs, the better. If you're married, have sex often. This releases feel-good chemicals as well.
- **Laughter.** Get a clean joke book or watch a comedy program and make yourself laugh several times a day.
- **Uplifting music.** In 1 Samuel 16, David used music to calm King Saul whenever a distressing spirit came upon him. In similar fashion, listen to music that emotionally moves and soothes you, like beautiful classical music or praise and worship music a few times a day.

7. Find your joy. The bottom line: You cannot have true peace or joy as long as an addiction controls you. Ask if food or sugar is one of the few sources of joy or pleasure you allow yourself. If that's the case, you can bring your life into balance. Take the time to think of other things you can add that bring you pleasure so these activities are restored to a healthy place in your life. {eo}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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