

This Common Stronghold Is Why You Keep Getting So Sick

Our society faces an epidemic because over half of Americans live with a chronic illness, and a third suffer from obesity. The American health crisis is primarily due to the overconsumption of sugar and processed foods. Unfortunately, sweets and refined carbohydrates are addictive and harmful to the human body.

Addiction is a compulsive repetition of an activity despite life-damaging consequences. Regrettably, people become addicted to sugar and carbs to the point that it causes excessive weight or health issues. Take the time now to watch this five-minute Ted-Ed video, "How Does Sugar Affect the Brain?" by the neuroscientist Nicole Avena, Ph.D. This video explains how we get hooked on foods with a high sugar content.

Sugar causes the release of dopamine in the brain, which is part of our bodies' feel-good reward system. Dopamine, a feel-good neurohormone, releases when we eat foods high in sugar, take opiate drugs, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, cuddle with our kids or pet a dog. A dopamine rush can rewire the brain to desire more of whatever causes its release. Therefore, when a food addict sees sugary foods, dopamine releases and causes the person's focus to narrow. That person can think only about eating that food item to experience the euphoria it brings.

We enjoy the feeling of dopamine, so we keep eating carbs. At some point, an overconsumption of sugar and processed foods rewire the brain's neural pathways and cause a person to become addicted. The brain's hijacking triggers binge eating despite its consequences of weight gain and health problems. Therefore, getting off sugar is more complex than it may seem. It is no longer about willpower and self-discipline but a

biochemical addiction.

Two hallmarks of addiction include persistent desire and repeated unsuccessful attempts to stop. Being addicted to food is like having an alien inside of you who takes control of your body and eats a bunch of unhealthy food. You can't stop it. Sugar and wheat hijack your body. You can't halt the craving or binges no matter what you try. Your willpower is never enough. Understanding that food addiction is not a lack of self-control, but a rewiring of the brain, helps you to be more compassionate with yourself.

If you have not considered the possibility of having a food addiction, do not feel shame over the terminology. Your body has fallen prey to the accumulative effects of sugar and wheat that are ingrained in so many of our culture's food habits. The surgeon general's 2016 report indicated that addiction is a chronic brain disease, not a moral failing.

It is amazing that everyone in our culture has not fallen into the food addiction trap. Entitlement leads to indulging, which leads to addiction. It is a slippery slope once you take your first bite of that addictive food. Down the slope you fall as you consume the whole package—which you did not intend to do. If you are addicted, you can't rely on moderation. You need to understand what is causing you to consume foods in a manner you do not want.

In addition to being addictive, sugar and refined carbohydrates cause disease. Chronic ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity are related to the consumption of too much of the wrong types of food. Therefore, gaining knowledge is essential to changing one's eating habits.

Determining whether you are a food addict will help you understand yourself and enable you to effectively overcome this addiction. To take an online quiz to determine if you are

addicted to food, go to [If you are a food addict](#), I recommend you join a Christian-based weight-loss program or a 12-step food addiction program along with a corresponding support group. Also, obtain a prayer/accountability partner to encourage you.

Fifty years ago, food addiction was unheard of, but today, with the way the food industry entices us with sugar, wheat and artificial flavors, it is common. Understanding that you have a food addiction will help you determine your course of action. We are more than physical beings; we are spiritual as well, and we can untangle the brain's rewiring to reset it back to normal. In the next article, we will discuss a five-step freedom from addiction plan.

This is a special promotion offered to Charisma readers. Get your free copy of *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates* so you can start your journey to optimal health. {eo}

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