

## 30 Day Sugar Challenge Handout for Week 1

*“A sugar craving is simply the body asking for energy”*  
- Joshua Rosenthal

### How Much Sugar is Too Much?

In 2009, the American Heart Association (AHA) released guidelines for sugar consumption. They recommend maximum daily intake at: 5 teaspoons (20grams) of sugar/day for adult women; 9 teaspoons (36g) of sugar/day for adult men; 3 teaspoons (12g) sugar/day for children. One teaspoon of granulated white sugar is about 4g.

There are many hidden sources of sugar. For example, ketchup, BBQ sauce, packaged fruit, cereal bars, spaghetti sauce, bread, chips, cereal, and beverages have some of the highest sugar content.

### Common names for sugar:

Barely malt	diastase	syrup
Beet sugar	diastatic malt	honey
Brown sugar	ethyl maltol	invert sugar
Buttered syrup	evaporated cane juice	lactose
Cane-juice crystals	fructose	malt syrup
Cane sugar	fruit juice	maltodextrin
Caramel	fruit-juice concentrate	maltose
Carob syrup	glucose	mannitol
Corn syrup	glucose solids	molasses
Corn syrup solids	golden sugar	raw sugar
Date sugar	golden syrup	refiner's syrup
Dextran	grape sugar	sorbitol
Dextrose	high fructose corn syrup	sorghum syrup
Sucrose	Turbinado sugar	yellow sugar

## Understanding cravings

- Dehydration
  - Occurs as mild hunger
  - Only get thirsty when on verge of dehydration
  - **Key:** Before giving into craving, drink full glass of water
  
- Lifestyle
  - Is this a way of dealing with emotions?
  - Substitute for entertainment?
  - Filling a void?
  - **Key:** Emotional check-in
  
- Yin/Yang Imbalance
  - Some foods are more yin (expansive)
    - White sugar
    - Can have us feel light, elevated mood, relief from blockages and stagnation
    - Rapid increase of serotonin, followed by rapid decrease → depression, low energy, anxiety, loss of concentration
  - Some more yang (contractive)
    - Salt, animal proteins, junk food
    - Can have us feel strong, aggressive, increase physical/mental power
    - Too much – bloated, heavy, sluggish, mentally slow
  - Eating foods on one extreme or other causes us to crave in order to reestablish balance
  - Eating extreme foods daily results in body becoming exhausted and depleted as it tries to get rebalanced
  - **Key:** look to eat in a balanced way throughout the day; deconstruct cravings and feed body what it really wants
  
- Repeating history
  - Cravings can come from what we've recently eaten or childhood foods

- **Key:** Eat healthier versions of foods we remember with love
- Seasonal
  - We often crave foods that will balance out the energy of the seasons
  - Other cravings may be related to holidays
- Lack of Nutrients
  - When we are depleted, we will crave foods to replenish what's missing
  - Example: low minerals = salt craving; overall depletion = cravings for non-nutritional forms of energy (like caffeine)
  - **Key:** feed your body what it needs, avoid food that robs body of nutrients
- Hormones
  - Fluctuating testosterone and estrogen levels can cause cravings
  - **Key:** Make sure your hormones are balanced
- De-evolution
  - When things are going well, sometimes we self-sabotage
  - We can crave foods that throw us off balance, then we crave others to restore balance
  - This is common when blood sugars get low
  - **Key:** be aware of eating throughout the day, using mood swings as a good indicator you need to feed your body real food

### **Tips for Kicking the Sugar Habit and Balancing Blood Sugar**

- **Don't keep sugar-laden foods at home**
  - Avoid the temptation!
  - If guests bring sugary foods for a party, make sure they leave with them

- If you do have some sugar in the house, make sure it's only one serving
  
- **Get more sleep**
  - Studies show that making sure you get 9 hours of sleep each night has a significant impact on curbing carbohydrate cravings
  - Sleep controls appetite...and therefore contributes to obesity, adult-onset diabetes and high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, depression
  - Once you start the sleep cycle, cholesterol, blood pressure and insulin resistance all go up – that is normal to prepare for extended sleep so we don't have to wake up to eat
  - When we are exposed to extended light (beyond light of sun), we are telling ourselves to prepare for winter (because we think it's summer), so we have urge to create a base layer of fat – and consume carbs, alcohol and sugar, especially at night
  
- **Add more food**
  - When we restrict ourselves of something, it can often lead to over-indulgence because we feel deprived
  - If we have plentiful healthy options that we are eating regularly, the less healthy options will soon get crowded out! There's only so much food and drink one can consume in day...if you get in the basics of health, you're bound to look for sugar less! Especially if you start the day with healthful choices
  
- **Remove corn from your diet**
  - So much of the processed sugar comes from corn, it's best to avoid corn until you've given up sugar for 2 months
  - Corn can trigger the same cravings as sugar
  
- **Protein and fiber**
  - Protein helps keep blood sugar levels stable which reduces cravings
  - Protein helps to form enzymes needed for digestion, gut healing and neurotransmitters like serotonin.
  - Fiber helps slow down the entry of sugars into the blood stream
  - Fiber also helps to fill us up so we eat smaller portions

- **Always read labels**
  - Sugar lurks in the most unsuspecting places like ketchup and other condiments
  - Even “health foods” utilize hidden sugars to increase flavor
- **Eat healthy fats at every meal**
  - Helps to control cravings and balance blood sugar
  - Fats are what helps us feel satiated when we eat – will help us to feel satisfied for longer
  - Examples: nuts, seeds, nut butters, avocado, coconut (oil, milk, whole), organic butter, olive oil, sesame oil, organic eggs, ghee, full fat organic dairy products
- **Tell friends and family**
  - By letting others know your goals and asking for support, you’ll be less likely to succumb to pressures/cravings
- **Limit salt**
  - Excess salt can cause you to want to balance that in the body – with excess sugar
- **Exercise**
  - Exercise shuts down then appetat – the mechanism in the brain that controls appetite
  - Exercise also effectively utilizes glucose and helps regulate blood sugar
- **Be aware of the psychology behind cravings**
  - Oftentimes we crave or eat when we are experiencing strong emotions.
  - Practice checking in with yourself daily to get used to bringing awareness to your feelings
  - Some examples of emotional states that can lead to cravings include:
    - Dissatisfied with relationship
    - Inappropriate exercise routing (too much or too little or wrong type)

- Boredom
- Stressed
- Uninspired by job
- Lack a spiritual practice
- Books to consider: When Food is Love by Janeen Roth; Nourishing Traditions by Marc David; “The Zen of Eating by Ronna Kabatznick, PhD; Integrative Nutrition by Joshua Rosenthal
- **Prepare meals with all 6 tastes**
  - Ayurvedic tradition suggests that we include all 6 tastes – sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent – at each meal. When we do, the body becomes more balanced - minimizing cravings, stabilizing appetite and perfecting digestion. Foods usually contain more than one taste, but they are identified by their main flavor:
    - **Sweet:** honey, rice, milk, butter/ghee, coconut, dates, fig, grapes, squash, carrots, sweet potato, beets, fruit, walnut, chicken, eggs, and most grains
    - **Sour:** citrus fruits (lemons, limes, grapefruit), cheese, yogurt, tomatoes, apple, olive, peach, pineapple, plum, raspberry, adzukik beans, strawberry, vinegar (ume plum vinegar), and fermented foods (sauerkraut, pickles, miso)
    - **Salty:** sea salt, sea vegetables (kelp, dulse and other seaweeds)
    - **Bitter:** Leafy greens (spinach, kale, chard, green cabbage, romaine), zucchini, eggplant, olives, turmeric, vinegar
    - **Pungent:** ginger, onions, radish, black and white pepper, mustard, chives, cinnamon, clove, dill, garlic, green onion, red pepper, rosemary, basil, salsa
    - **Astringent:** legumes (beans and lentils), apples, cranberries, pomegranates, pears, dried fruit, potatoes, walnuts, broccoli, cauliflower, artichoke, asparagus, turnip, rye, buckwheat, quinoa, marjoram, turmeric

## Supportive Nutrients

- Chromium
  - Essential for proper glucose and insulin function.
  - Improves body's ability to burn fat and can help reduce sugar cravings
  - 200-1000mcg daily, depending on person
- Vitamin C
  - Needed to produce carnitine which helps to transport fat into cells for energy
  - Fatigue is common symptom when it's depleted
  - 2000mg daily
- B complex
  - Needed to process glucose, maintain hormone balance, and most metabolic functions
  - Responsible for energy production – deficiency results in fatigue, foggy headedness, hormonal imbalance, irritability, anxiety, depression
  - B vitamins are utilized to process refined sugar, so are further depleted by consuming sugar
  - Take high potency formula – one or two in morning
- 5HTP
  - Sugar cravings can be related to low serotonin levels.
  - Been found to eliminate anxiety, lift spirits and ease depression
  - Can help with sleep
  - Decreases impulsivity, increases satiety response
  - Start with 50mg daily (consult with physician if taking anti-depressants or other psychopharmaceuticals)
- Gymnema sylvestre
  - Positive effects on insulin resistance, decreases fasting blood sugar, enhances action of insulin
  - 200mg twice daily

- Alpha-Lipoic Acid
  - Improves insulin resistance through numerous actions, including increasing activation of glucose transporters
  - 100mg daily
  
- Cinnamon
  - Has been shown to decrease blood sugar and keep it regulated
  - As little as ¼ tsp of the spice is enough to be effective!

### **Guidelines:**

Everyone on this challenge is encouraged to eliminate refined/processed sugar:

- This includes cane sugar, any form of added sugar, honey, sweeteners, agave
- Even products that aren't "sweet" tasting should be checked for added sugar

As we embark on this challenge, there are other foods that are processed as simple sugars or may contribute to continued sugar cravings. Each person is different, so beyond our "refined sugars" list, you may want to consider eliminating:

- Alcohol
- Corn
- Grains
- Simple carbohydrates
- Fruit (fresh or dried)
- Potatoes
- Caffeine
- Tobacco
- Stress
- Cannabis

I encourage everyone to practice mindful eating during this month. Take a few breaths before eating a meal – this helps get the digestive juices flowing! Eat at a table, not in front of computer/TV or at your desk. Take



time throughout the day to notice how you are feeling emotionally. Notice how often you feel hungry throughout the day and what that brings up for you. Consider allowing yourself to feel hungry. Drink more water. Feel free to utilize the cravings worksheet to note any patterns or tendencies that might help you discover a deeper connection to your body.

### **Baked Apples**

6 apples

1/2 cup raisins

Cinnamon

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash apples and core from the top.

Sprinkle apples with cinnamon, 1 tbsp. of walnuts and 1 tbsp. of raisins.

Place on baking sheet or casserole dish and bake 20 to 30 minutes, until the skins are wrinkly.