

SUGAR DETOX

A Simple Guide To Curb Sugar Cravings
And Beat Sugar Addiction



TED BEGNOCHE

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Please note the author is not a physician or nutritionist, and this book should be viewed as for recreational purposes only.

The information contained in this book should not to be used as medical advice of any sort. Any recipes should be checked for compatibility with your current medical condition by your physician. Do check with your doctor before making any dietary changes. For those currently on medication of any sort, or with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, it is vitally important that you work in conjunction with your doctor when making any changes at all to your diet or exercise routines.

Meet The Author

Hello, I'm Ted, and it's nice to meet you. I've been writing for almost as long as I've been reading, which by now is longer than I'd care to admit.

I'm passionate about my writing, and I strive to produce the absolute best product that I can each and every time I sit down to work.

I have a few other passions as well. In no particular order, they include, fishing, being outdoors, my amazing family, all things technology, and researching subjects I'm interested in.

All of which leads us to this book. I have an intense interest in food and nutrition, and I feel as though there are gaps in what we learn as we go through life regarding nutrition and what effects food has on our bodies.

I decided to write this book because I had heard many differing opinions about sugar addiction and what the effects of eating too much sugar has on the body. The more I learned, the more I realized that sugar addiction is indeed very real, and a very big problem for a lot of people.

As I continue to research the subject of nutrition, I invite you to come along on with me. There is no greater investment than you can make than to improve your health through better nutrition.

Please use [this link](#) to enter your name and email address and sign up for my email list. Doing so will offer a number of advantages.

You'll get advance notice of any upcoming books, and my books usually launch as free offers for the first few days. In addition, any time I update any information in this book I will send you the updated version free of charge.

Also, to accompany this book you'll receive a PDF file of delicious recipes that will put you on the right track as you begin your sugar detox.

What I won't do is bug you with unnecessary emails – that is one thing I refuse to do. Your email address is safe with me, and there is a link included in every email that will allow you to unsubscribe any time you wish.

I'm betting you won't though, because this is good stuff, if I do say so myself.

Sincerely

Ted Begnoche

Recipe Book Free Download

Please take a moment to sign up for my email list. It's quick and painless and I promise I won't bug you with unnecessary emails because I know we all hate that. And let me assure you that your email address is safe with me, I'll never rent out my list for any reason.

I've created a short recipe book that you can download immediately when you sign up. It contains some delicious recipes that have become my favorites since I've kicked the sugar habit to the curb. I'm hoping you enjoy them as much as I do.

Signing up will also give you the opportunity to learn when my next books are coming out, and many of them are free for a few days at launch time!

You can download it here: [Sugar Detox](#)

Introduction

Welcome! Thank you for purchasing this book. By doing so, you've demonstrated a commitment to improving your understanding of the value that proper nutrition plays in your life, and to ridding yourself of one of the most ubiquitous and damaging food addictions that we face today.

Addiction to sugar is a very real and menacing problem. Most people who are addicted to sugar don't actually realize it, and this is one of the reasons it can be so difficult to deal with.

In this book we'll examine the reasons why we need sugar in our diets, the dangers of ingesting too much refined sugar, and how to spot and avoid all the places where sugar hides.

We'll also cover ways to find healthier substitutes for sugar, and how to avoid sugary foods when eating out or grabbing meals on the run.

You'll learn a great deal, I promise, and some facts may shock you, but please stick with the recommendations and advice contained here.

You CAN beat sugar addiction, and armed with the knowledge you're about to uncover, combined with a healthy dose of good old fashioned will power, you will be successful in your quest.

We'll take an honest look at sugar, and then come up with a gentle and realistic way to begin removing it from your life. We can call it a detox, but sometimes that word conjures up some bad images. I assure you that while removing sugar from your life is not an easy task, it doesn't have to involve radical changes either.

I should also mention that I'm not a doctor or nutritionist, but don't let that put you off. I've been researching and writing on the subject of nutrition and food for a number of years, and have started blogs and websites dedicated to raw foods, detox and cleansing, and also nutrition in general.

I've also been a content provider for nutrition websites as well as a ghost writer for various ebooks and blogs.

I've done numerous guest posts as well.

The point I'm trying to make is this. I've done the research for you, so you don't have to search all across the Internet to find answers to your questions about detoxing from sugar.

That's totally enough about me, though. This book is really about you, so let's get started and dig in.

Wait! One more thing. Later on in the book, in the Doing Your Own Detox section, I'll recommend keeping a food journal if you're not doing so already. This is something that's easy to do and a week's worth of data should be enough to get an idea about your processed sugar intake, so please consider starting an informal journal tracking everything you eat during the course of a day.

Chapter 1 - Why We Need Sugar

Let's first of all be very clear about one thing: Our bodies need sugar to function properly and maintain optimum health.

But that doesn't mean we should eat it by the spoonful, or drink those carbonated and sugary drinks that taste so good. That's not that kind of sugar we're talking about.

Sugar does play a part in a healthy diet, but it's a certain kind of sugar that we're after, so let's examine sugar in its various forms.

Sugar goes by many names, including molasses, brown rice syrup, brown sugar, cane sugar, and caramel, just to name a few. You can see a complete list of all the common ones [right here](#), for your reference.

All of these are REFINED sugars, which means they've gone through a process to extract and purify the sugar.

In the most simplest of explanations, refining means that all the impurities and plant matter have been stripped away, leaving only pure sugar crystals behind.

The sugar in your sugar bowl, also known as sucrose, is usually derived from either sugar cane or sugar beet plants. All plants produce sugar in some form, but these two plants have sugar available in the easiest form to deal with for refiners.

Refined sugar is the stuff we're trying to cut back on. And this seems like it should be pretty easy, because there are a number of natural alternatives we can turn to that are just as sweet as our beloved sugar, but are also much better for your body.

The stuff I worry about, and you should too, is the sugar that hides itself in processed foods.

We'll talk a bit about that here, but I've devoted a whole chapter to this later on in the book.

Label Mania - Over the years I've become a real food label fanatic. The longer the list of ingredients I see, the more likely I'm apt to put an item back on the shelf.

Ideally, I try not to eat anything boxed or canned, but I know this is sometimes not practical. Hey, I'm a realist too, but I do the absolute best I can when it comes to choosing the stuff I put in my body.

If you haven't been studying food labels, it's really time to get started, because you'll be able to avoid most of the bad things we're trying to eliminate just by leaving them behind at the grocery store.

Let's do a short and simple exercise. Go to your pantry right now and grab a box or can of anything. Go ahead, don't feel silly, I'll wait right here.

Okay, ready? Take a look at the list of ingredients on the side or back of the package.

We're looking for aliases that sugar usually goes by in processed foods, things like dextrose, cane crystals, corn syrup, or fructose sweetener.

What about high fructose corn syrup? Do you see fructose, lactose or maltose?

These are all other names for refined sugar, and this is really just scratching the surface.

I know this might seem like a huge hassle to you at the moment, especially if you're new at deciphering these long lists of ingredients, but this is an essential skill to develop and once you get the hang of it, you'll have no problem quickly determining what's good and not so good for you.

Gimme Sugar - Let's talk a little about why your body needs sugar.

As you know, the human body is quite a complex mechanism, and the purpose of this book is not to bore you to tears with scientific explanations and facts, but to give you accurate information that you can act upon and implement in your daily life.

The simple truth about sugar is that it gives our bodies the energy we need to make it through the day.

Your body needs all kinds of foods to maintain optimum health, and sugar is a big part of that.

While you might be tempted to eat a spoonful of the white stuff the next time you're feeling a bit sluggish, I have to warn you that this is not the stuff we're after.

White table sugar is what's called a simple carbohydrate, and that's sugar in the wrong form.

What our bodies are really after is complex carbohydrates, the kind that are found bundled together with other nutrients and minerals.

These complex carbohydrates can be enjoyed in fruits, vegetables and grains, in a package that your body was meant to receive.

When our bodies break down the carbohydrates contained in the foods we eat, they get turned in another type of sugar, called glucose.

Our bodies use glucose in the most amazing fashion. It's the primary source of energy for our muscles, and it's the only form of fuel our brains can use.

If you starve yourself from sugar, your body will find another way to create the glucose it needs.

This can include using fat to make what it needs, or even relying on good old protein to make glucose.

The trouble is, when your body is starved for glucose it goes into “stress mode”, and this releases adrenaline and other substances designed to assist your body when it senses it’s in trouble.

Your body is not meant to operate in this mode for very long because it’s very stressful to all your other systems.

So don’t deprive yourself of sugar, just be careful about how you take it in.

I’m sure you’ve heard of the dreaded “sugar high”, and have perhaps even experienced this phenomenon yourself.

Hey, I’m right there with you. During certain periods of my life I was using candy bars and sodas to get through the afternoon, only to come crashing down later on in the day.

I know how hard it is to break the cycle. It took me years to figure out why I was so dependent upon my afternoon sugar high. The peaks obtained with a quick sugar rush are definitely not worth the valleys you have to ride through when you experience the letdown.

This is, of course, a quick and over-simplified view of what your body does with sugar.

The purpose is to make sure you understand that not all sugar is evil, and that your body really needs sugar to operate at peak performance.

In the next chapter we’ll discuss how consuming too much sugar affects the body, including nasty side effects and long term ramifications of sugar consumption.

So let’s get to it!

Chapter 2 - How Sugar Affects Our Bodies

Oh those tasty treats! Donuts, cupcakes, pies, and everything in between.

I was pretty hooked on the sweet stuff, and I know many of you can identify with that.

It's time we all kick that habit, because the positive health effects you'll see will be dramatic and can occur pretty quickly.

First let's examine a few statistics just to give you an idea of how pervasive sugar really is in today's everyday life.

On average, Americans eat 22 teaspoons of sugar every single day. If you really stop and think about it, that's pretty frightening, because it's about 140 pounds each year!

What's even more disturbing is the fact that the average child in America eats over 30 teaspoons of sugar every day. Yikes!

About one third of the extra sugar we ingest comes from sugary drinks like soda, and another 20 percent comes from candy bars and other types of sweet snacks.

Fruits drinks and dairy type desserts, along with milk, round out the bulk of our daily sugar intake.

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 9 teaspoons each day, and I do believe they know what they're talking about and have our best interests "at heart".

I don't know about you, but when I examine that list I can already see areas where cuts could be made.

But what's the reason for this addiction? Is it because these foods and drinks just taste so good that we can't resist them?

Or is there something more at play here? Perhaps there's an underlying reason that we cannot seem to kick the sugar habit.

According to at least [one important study](#), there seems to be definite evidence that sugar is just as addictive as certain drugs.

Of course, you can also find plenty of studies and papers that claim just the opposite is true.

In my opinion, there is certainly some sort of physical addiction with sugar. Eating foods that contain a lot of sugar causes a release of dopamine in our brains, and this triggers our "reward center." It makes us feel good!

But what's indisputable is the fact that consuming too much sugar can wreck your health in many different ways.

Let's examine a few of these now.

Sugar and Heart Health – It's been proven by numerous studies that sugar has a detrimental effect on the health of your heart. Sugar contains specific molecules that can actually impair the way your heart pumps blood.

And more than that, excessive sugar intake can affect your overall heart health, not just the way your heart pumps. In fact, one 15 year study, the important points of which you can read [here](#), highlight the fact that the chances of dying from heart disease rose as the percentage of sugar intake increased for study participants.

Moreover, it didn't seem to matter how old the people were, what sex, or even what physical condition or activities they normally performed.

And of course this is not the only study that could draw these conclusions.

So in other words, it looks to me like excess sugar in your diet eventually will affect your heart.

Sugar And Cancer – Depending on who you listen to and where you put your faith, you'll be on one side or the other of this long-time debate.

I'll just touch on it here, because there's a lot of misinformation in circulation.

With as much as we know about cancer and the way it develops, and also the Standard American Diet and how much we rely on packaged, processed, and otherwise modified foods, it would be wise to avoid any added substances as much as possible.

While I've read studies that claim there is no direct 1 to 1 correlation between ingesting sugar and the formation of cancer cells, I think that common sense tells us to steer clear of excess sugar at this point.

Sugar And Belly Fat – Well this one just makes sense, doesn't it? Even without all the science to back it up, intuitively we could assume that too much sugar will make you plump.

The reasons for this are many. Some groups blame video games and the increasing inactivity of our children. With the proliferation of cell phones and MP3 players also came a generation of kids that are a little less active than the previous generation, so this theory makes sense.

Combine that with our on-the-go lifestyle these days, where families are always on the run to various activities, especially at mealtimes, and you can see where this could be a recipe for disaster.

And the food industry doesn't help at all. Most of the advertising we see is aimed at getting kids to ingest more and more sugary snacks and drinks, and not the healthy foods they should be eating.

We could argue that kids should be getting the right information and signals from their parents at home, and I actually agree with that, but we can't deny the fact that the food industry as a whole is expert at tempting people of all ages, and especially children.

In my opinion, I believe it's the soda and other sugar laden drinks that do most of the damage, but desserts and candies really wreak havoc too.

Sugar And Diabetes – Answers about this are not really clear cut, but for sure, Type 1 Diabetes is caused by genetics and other factors that may trigger the onset of the disease.

Type 2 Diabetes, however, is usually a combination of your genetic makeup and also your lifestyle and eating habits.

Anyone who is overweight is susceptible to Type 2 Diabetes, so it's natural to assume that foods that tend to pack weight on us could ultimately play a part in the onset of diabetes. And research has shown that consuming drinks with a high sugar content is definitely linked to the onset of this disease.

Drinks to avoid are regular soda, sports drinks, fruit punch, and, well, you get the idea.

Digestion, Simplified - Now let's take a look at exactly what happens when sugar enters your body.

As we discussed, sugar comes in lots of different forms, and it's in what form the sugar enters your body that very much determines how your body reacts and what your body does with this sudden influx of the sweet stuff.

Almost all carbohydrates get broken down into glucose by your body, either for use immediately or to be stored in your liver and also your muscles for use later on.

Refined sugar metabolizes at a very rapid rate. Remember that we said during refinement, all plant material and other nutrients are stripped away, leaving pure sugar behind.

So these refined sugars are almost immediately converted into fructose and glucose by your body's efficient systems, and this causes a spike in blood sugar and insulin levels.

This in turn will give you a burst of energy, but it's very short-lived. And if you don't use this energy almost immediately, your body has an ingenious way of dealing with it.

It turns it into fat so it can maybe, or maybe not, use it later!

The substance called fructose is metabolized mainly in your liver, putting a strain on this vital organ as it tries to deal with what's going on.

Another big problem of eating refined sugar is the fact that it leaves you feeling empty instead of full, so that when you eat that full size candy bar, it won't fill you up and you'll need more sooner rather than later.

When you eat a piece of fruit, your body reacts very differently. Fresh fruit has vitamins, minerals, fiber, and a host of other good things for you in addition to any sugar it might provide.

All the rest of these components, but especially the fiber, is the reason why your body is better off when you consume fresh fruits and vegetables to get the sugar you need.

The soluble fiber in foods actually expands in your stomach, and this is what makes you feel fuller after eating an orange or apple. Fiber also slows the digestion of the food, allowing sugars to be released more slowly into your blood, preventing those nasty sugar spikes.

When it comes to eating fruit, make sure you keep the fiber intact. Once fruit has been cooked or even juiced, the fiber is broken down and isn't as effective.

Let's take an example that we're all familiar with.

Have you had a glass of orange juice lately? If so, I'll bet it tasted good!

I used to have at least one, and sometimes two glasses a day, but I've stopped that now. Let me explain why.

Orange juice is loaded with all kinds of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, but it also has a much higher concentration of sugar than when it's in whole form. The main reason for this is because once an orange is juiced it loses some of its fiber content.

I don't want to bash a whole industry here, and obviously many, many people love orange juice, and I'm one of them.

But I believe eating an orange in the form nature provides for us is the healthiest way to do it. If you absolutely have to have orange juice, then juicing it fresh yourself would be the best option.

Wrapup - As you can imagine, children are susceptible to sugar overdose a bit more than adults are. All the fruit drinks and cereal they consume are engineered to taste great while providing plenty of empty calories.

So don't be fooled by studies that claim fructose is not bad for you. It can be very bad indeed, but as you can see from reading the above, it all depends on what form it comes in. It contains very little in the way of nutrition.

A little goes a long way when it comes to fructose consumption, so please bear that in mind.

Please also remember that sugar is really not the enemy here. In fact, your body would shut down completely without it.

It's the way we ingest sugar that's the problem, so be careful how you consume sweets when you're trying to kick the sugar habit.

No discussion about eliminating sugar would be complete without mentioning alcoholic beverages.

Just about all types of alcohol contain some sort of sugar or carbohydrates. Just how much varies a great deal. For instance, distilled spirits contain very little sugar, while a typical beer can be loaded with carbs.

Consuming a moderate amount of alcohol can raise your blood sugar level quite a bit, but overconsumption can actually have the reverse effect. This is because it interferes with the normal function of your liver.

Alcohol will also stimulate your appetite and may cause you to overeat, or in my case, eat anything in sight! It can also affect your judgment and reasoning, allowing you to grab desserts to fill yourself up, even though you know deep down that what you're doing isn't right.

The bottom line is this: When you're eliminating sugar from your daily routine, you have to severely limit your alcohol consumption, and it may be best to forego it altogether. But don't fret; you'll feel better in the morning.

Next we'll see how to tell if you're addicted to sugar. Let's get to it!

Chapter 3 - Are You Addicted To Sugar?

Wow! This one question has caused so much debate among scientists and nutritional experts. No one can seem to agree on whether or not it's possible to become addicted to sugar.

Let's take a look at a few things that could indicate whether or not you've become dependent upon getting a sugar fix, and then I'll give you my take on it.

What really defines an "addiction?" Mr. Webster says it's "a strong and harmful need to have something, or do something." Something like an illegal drug, or maybe gambling.

It defines something that takes over your reasoning and common sense, leaving you no willpower to resist the temptation.

I don't know about you, but it sounds to me like I could very easily have at least a couple of food addictions, because sometimes no matter how I try, there's no way to resist chocolate.

Of course, now that I have better educated myself regarding the potentially harmful effects of empty sugar calories, I have an easier time of passing up sweet treats.

But some days it's still a struggle.

So, am I addicted?

Let's examine a few of the characteristic traits of sugar addiction to see if we can make a determination one way or the other.

Cravings – Do you always crave sugar around the same time every day? Do you need that mid-afternoon boost you get from a candy bar or something out of the vending machine at work?

If so, then it's quite possible you've become dependent upon the sugar rush or the emotional comfort that you get when your body gets a jolt of sugar.

Eating When Not Hungry – Do you automatically grab for something as soon as you get up from the dinner table? This could also be a sign that you're addicted to certain foods. Eating when you're not hungry is a craving, or an impulse, that you're not able to control.

Party Animal – Are you one of the people that automatically head for the desserts at any party or holiday gathering you attend? Been there, done that a thousand times, so I understand! I would often forsake the cheese and crackers or even the main dishes, just to get a shot at the sweets, and sometimes that would be the only thing on my plate. Not good...

Cutting Back Can Be Tough – Have you ever tried to cut down on your sugar intake, only to find that you're miserable, irritable, or downright ornery? Maybe you experienced headaches, some nausea, or even anxiety.

These are all common side effects of withdrawing from sugar. Some can be nasty, like you're withdrawing from a real drug.

So you can draw your own conclusions, but it looks to me like sugar is a pretty addictive substance.

And like all addictions, at least all that I've had, it can really sneak up on you without you knowing it. Over the course of weeks, months and then years, sugar can work its way into your life and wreak havoc on various systems quietly and completely.

You may think you're handling your sugar well, and that could be true at this point in time. But odds are, the overconsumption of sugar will eventually catch up with you, and by that time it will be much more difficult to reverse the devastating effects.

If you find that you see yourself in some of these symptoms, please don't despair. This is exactly where I was a few years ago, and if I can beat a sugar addiction, I am pretty certain that you can as well.

All it takes is a little education to realize you may be eating too much sugar and that you could be hooked, and then a little willpower and know how so you can avoid the traps and pitfalls.

We'll devote a whole chapter to this a bit later on in the book, and you'll find some excellent ways to take your mind off sugar binging.

I promised you my take on the subject, so here it goes.

I believe sugar is one of the most addictive foods on the planet. But I don't just believe it's a physical addiction.

I also think there's a mental component as well. I think it's easy to become mentally addicted to all sorts of things, and certainly sugar is one of them.

So in my opinion we're fighting not just one demon here, but a two headed beast that tugs at your body as well as your mind.

Numerous studies have proven a physical link for sugar addiction, but I guess I'm really going out on a limb when I say it can also be a mental addiction.

I still firmly believe it, though. And this is the reason why.

They don't call it comfort food for nothing.

Certain foods we eat taste great, are very satisfying and filling, and also give us a great boost mentally, whether it's a favorite dish from our childhood or something that brings back memories of happy times.

I have to admit, corn-on-the-cob takes me back to my childhood and growing up near a farm that had the absolute best sweet corn I have ever tasted. It just makes me happy.

Some people eat to relieve stress, and lots of them go for chocolate and other sweets. Some reach for a bottle of booze, or pills.

This is where the mental addiction part comes in for me.

Agree or not, but I really think there's something to it.

Chapter 4 - Where Does Sugar Hide?

If you're feeling like it's an uphill battle to begin to reduce all the extra sugar in your diet, let me tell you, you're not alone. Sometimes I still feel the same way.

Don't worry, I'm here to help and we can do this together. So let's dig in and discover where all the sugar in our food is hanging out.

As we mentioned briefly before, sugar goes by many names, and that's part of what makes it so darned difficult to detect. Just look at some of these monikers, in no particular order.

Dextrose

Carob syrup

Date sugar

Cane juice crystals

Corn Syrup

High Fructose Corn Syrup

Maltose

Molasses

Mannitol

Sucrose

And that's just scratching the surface. Remember you can see a more complete list near the end of the book.

And as we spoke of before, now is a great time to get familiar with reading those food labels that are plastered all over the products in the supermarket.

I can hear you groaning now, but this is an absolutely essential skill to develop if you're serious about cutting down on your sugar intake. And it's really not that bad once you get the hang of it and know some of the tricks, so let's get to it.

Label Lingo - The Food and Drug Administration controls how manufacturers must label all their products regarding nutrition info, and any food that comes in boxes, bags, cans or jars must have a nutrition label.

This is totally separate from the manufacturer's package labeling, which we'll cover a bit later.

You can find a wealth of info contained on these labels, including but not limited to cholesterol information, serving size, ingredients, saturated fats and trans fat levels, sodium, carbohydrates, micronutrients, etc.

Believe it or not, there are actually a few things that do not make it to the food label as well, such as levels less than 1 gram of a macronutrient. For instance, fat-free products may not exactly be totally fat-free because under a certain level, manufacturers don't have to mention it.

Labels also don't include any information about pesticides, hormones, or antibiotics that may have come into contact with the food somewhere along its way to the supermarket.

Here's a little hint that not many people are aware of, and I have to admit that I didn't know this either. The ingredients on a nutritional food label are listed in descending order by weight.

In other words, the higher the ingredient is in the list, the more of it there is of the product.

Why don't they just say that to begin with? Are they deliberately trying to confuse us?

So we already know that sugar hides everywhere in our food, but let's try a quick, fun exercise.

If you have a can of regular soda laying around, take a look at that label now.

For those of you that don't, or are just too riveted by this information to move, I can tell you that there's not much going on in there.

What I see listed is about 45 milligrams of Sodium, Total Carbohydrates at 39 grams, and a little item called Sugars coming in at 39 grams as well.

That's it. Not much nutritional value there, but it tastes oh-so-good!

Hey, that's only half the experiment, though.

If you actually do this part, it will mean much more, but if you don't want to, I understand.

I recommend you get a paper plate and drag out your sugar bowl or 5 pound bag of sugar. Oh, and you'll also need a teaspoon for measuring.

Scoop out a teaspoon of sugar and plop it on the plate.

Then, do that 9 more times, and take a good look at that pile, because that's the amount of sugar that's in one can of regular soda.

If you did that experiment along with me, I'm sure your mouth is hanging open right about now, but either way, it's a shocking amount. I do recommend you actually go through this exercise, because seeing all that sugar piled on the plate is really a jolt to your system.

All right, I can hear you now. What if you don't drink regular soda and you're only doing the diet kind?

Diet soda contains something that's probably as bad for you as any of the sugar you're ingesting, as we'll see later on in this book.

Did anyone have cereal for breakfast this morning?

I used to eat cereal twice a day, morning and night. I loved all kinds, and the sweeter the better.

But starting your day with this stuff is the absolute wrong way to go, in my opinion, because in most of the cereals these days, and especially the ones that appeal to our kids, there's plenty of added sugar.

Most popular breakfast cereals have the equivalent of 3-4 added teaspoons of sugar per serving, but I'm not here to bash any one manufacturer or even cereal in general. I just want to point out the fact that sugar hides in places where you would not expect it.

Don't get me wrong, you can find some breakfast cereals that are better for you than others, you just have to do your homework.

Consider ketchup, one of my all time favorite condiments and something that, as hard as I try, I cannot give up totally. Believe me, I've cut back, but I can't seem to eliminate it. Some foods just cannot be eaten without it.

I don't measure my ketchup usage, but I probably should because there's 1 teaspoon of sugar in each tablespoon of ketchup you use.

Shocking, isn't it?

And that barbecue sauce you're using as a dip or marinade? The average serving is 2 tablespoons, and most sauces on the market have an average of 3-4 teaspoons of sugar in that amount.

So you can see by these few examples here that sugar hides out in the craziest of places, and if you're serious about cutting down your intake you'll need to first educate yourself a bit and then do some basic homework on the food labels until you can pick up a can of this or a box of that and spot what you're looking for, and what you're looking out for!

In an ideal world we'd all be eating fresh produce and vegetables and not have to worry about reading any labels and think about what kinds of other additives are in our foods.

But I realize that life just doesn't work that way anymore, and I want to be realistic here. To recommend that you only eat fresh produce and fruits, and don't buy anything in a box or bag, sounds all well and good, but in reality, it's extremely hard to do, and I understand that.

I just do the best I can, and for those processed items that I have to purchase because of convenience or even laziness on my part, I do my homework to pick the absolute best stuff I can find, and I do that by studying the labels.

I'll throw in a couple more label reading tips here for your convenience.

My number one rule is this: If you can't pronounce it, you probably don't want it in your body. Pretty simple, right?

And here's one still catches me from time to time.

You have to pay attention to the number of servings in the container or box you're buying. Remember that the nutritional numbers on the label are PER SERVING, and there could be more servings in the box than you're aware of.

Just when you think you're doing ok, you realize that a serving is only 12 pretzels, not the 3 handfuls you just had.

Honestly, I still get caught by this all the time, so watch out for the serving size.

Another good tip is to watch the percentages on the foods you're eating. Let me give you an example.

Say you're buying ground beef and you think you're being good by buying the expensive 90 percent lean option.

Well, you're definitely going in the right direction, but 10 percent of that product still comes from non-lean sources, such as pure animal fat. That means that a 6 ounce hamburger patty contains 15-20 grams of fat, and not the good kind.

I know this example strays a bit from the sugar shock we're trying to avoid, but I'm hoping to get you to realize what's on the labels and how to decipher things.

Packaging Perils - Let's take a look at how manufacturers enhance their packaging in order to make you think you're reaching for the healthiest item on the shelf.

Have you ever seen a product label advertising "reduced sugar"? They are all over the supermarket, I can guarantee you.

I can also guarantee you that the manufacturer will not sacrifice on taste to make things more healthy for you, so the next time you see a reduced sugar product, take a look at the ingredient list carefully.

Most likely you will see a sugar substitute in there, so look closely for things like sucralose, aspartame, high fructose corn syrup, etc.

Some of these additives are just as bad for you as the sugar we're trying to avoid in the first place.

Recently I saw a label on a soda bottle that claimed the product had antioxidants in it. After the discussion we had previously about how much sugar is contained in regular soda, I think we can agree that any antioxidants that were in the soda, probably because of some of the fruit flavorings, would be canceled out pretty quickly.

Here's another: Healthy water. Sounds pretty good to me, and it's marketed under all kinds of names and added benefits these days, and especially for kids.

But if you look really closely at the label, you can find some sort of artificial sweetener in there. Yes, only a few calories, no fat, and plenty of sucralose!

No thank you! I'll just have my regular old "unhealthy" water.

So here are a couple of takeaways from this chapter.

First, I know that you're serious about cutting down on your sugar intake, and because of that you'll have to become an expert at spotting the ways manufacturers disguise sugar.

Don't worry, it gets easier with practice and using the information in the chapter, you'll be proficient in no time. It might take a little more time at the supermarket at first, but you'll get good in a hurry, I promise.

And number two, don't get taken in by the manufacturer's fancy packaging and claims of "reduced sugar", or "low-fat", or "healthy".

Read the facts for yourself, and don't be misled by their advertising.

Ok, well done. In the next chapter we'll take a look at good carbs and bad carbs, and we'll figure out what to look for and how to sort through this confusing maze, and we'll use plain English, I promise!

Chapter 5 - Good Carbs vs Bad Carbs

Among all the confusion and misinformation surrounding nutrition these days, the role carbohydrates play in a healthy diet has to be up there near the top of most talked about and most misunderstood elements.

Let's start to unravel a few of the mysteries surrounding carbs. Hang in there with me, I promise all this controversy will begin to make more sense to you very soon.

How many low carb diets have you heard about now? There's Atkins', South Beach, The Paleo Diet, and on and on.

There are also high carb diets that you may never have heard about, and that don't get much publicity, such as the Ornish Diet.

So who is right? And who can you trust?

People throw around the carb word with abandon these days, but few really know what it means or what your body requires and how it reacts to carbs, so let's take a look at that first.

Crazy Over Carbs - Carbohydrates are categorized as macronutrients, in the same class as protein and fat.

There are many foods that fall into the category of carbohydrates, from simple table sugar to all sorts of things like pasta and potatoes.

Carbohydrates come in two forms, simple and complex. But carbs also come in 3 different types, fiber, starch, and sugar.

Wait a minute! I thought we were trying to be less confusing here?!

Hear me out, I promise it gets better.

Depending upon the type of carbohydrate you consume, your body does different things with it. Let's begin with a simple carb and see what happens.

All carbohydrates are broken down by your body during the digestive process. Your body turns them into glucose and uses the glucose as fuel to keep it running, or to store for use later.

Remember the simple carbs we just talked about? As you could guess, your body treats these types of carbs much differently than complex carbohydrates.

Carbohydrate digestion actually begins in your mouth, as your saliva contains an enzyme that begins to break carbs down. The bulk of the remaining carbohydrate digestion occurs in the small intestine.

Simple sugars get broken down in the small intestine by enzymes contained in the lining. Whichever enzyme goes to work depends upon the type of carb you've ingested. For instance, if you just drank a glass of milk, the enzyme lactase will do the job.

Once these carbs are broken down and ultimately converted into the substance called glucose, they are then absorbed by the small intestine and passed into the bloodstream.

What happens next you can probably guess at, but let me help you along.

As glucose passes into your bloodstream, the glucose level in your blood begins to rise. Just how quickly this rise occurs depends very much upon what and how much you've been eating.

This rise sends a signal to the pancreas to begin to let loose with insulin, which is secreted into the blood to assist with converting the glucose into glycogen.

Glycogen can be either deposited into the liver or muscles, but when they are full, the extra will be converted to fat and stored to be used later.

Glycogen in the liver helps to keep your blood sugar at normal levels. If your blood-sugar level drops below a certain spot, glycogen is converted into glucose and enters the bloodstream.

This cycle continues endlessly and automatically. The human body is a marvel at adapting and reacting to ever changing environments and workloads.

When you consume complex carbohydrates, your body still does its job breaking these down, but the rate at which this happens is different. That's because your body has to work harder to process these types of carbs.

Complex carbs are more desirable than simple carbs because the glucose that's broken down from them takes a longer time to enter your bloodstream. It's almost like a time-release capsule of food, whereas the glucose derived from simple carbs enters your blood almost immediately.

Simple carbs are responsible for raising your blood sugar too high or too quickly. Your body can handle this to a certain extent, but if this type of behavior happens repeatedly, your body will be under stress all the time.

A goal of mine is to avoid as many bad carbs as I can, while taking in as many of the good carbohydrates as possible.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating a low carb diet, or any diet for that matter, other than one that includes healthy and nutritious food while avoiding those problematic ones we talked about.

So I hope that clears up any questions you might have about good carbs vs bad carbs. It really isn't all that difficult when you think about it.

Pretty much anything that comes packaged, with a few exceptions, could very well fall into the bad carb category because of the addition of processed sugars.

So almost any kind of fresh produce is more than likely better for you than anything you'll get out of a box or bag.

Let talk a little about something you may have heard of in passing, but never really paid attention to.

Glycemic Index - It called the glycemic index, and it's a great way of knowing at a glance if what you're eating is on the good side or the bad side of the nutrition equation.

You can find many different websites that offer glycemic index charts, but here is one of the best ones I've found: [Glycemic Index](#)

The glycemic index can be a handy reference for individuals looking to watch their sugar intake, and certainly anyone who is diabetic is probably familiar with it, but I believe everyone should have workable knowledge of the glycemic index and what the numbers mean.

Of course, no discussion of glycemic index would be complete without talking about glycemic load as well, so let's break these terms down into simple language.

The proper definition for glycemic index is that it's an index that gives a rating, or ranking, to carbohydrates this is based upon the conversion of the carb into glucose within the body.

Basically, the glycemic index is a moving target because the carbohydrates of certain foods can change with regard to cooking or ripeness, so it's not an exact science. It is, however, a very good rule of thumb to go by if you're watching your sugar intake.

There's a simple formula for calculating the GI of a food. I don't know about you, but I'm not dragging a calculator out at the supermarket, so I have committed certain foods to memory, and use my intuition or my smart phone when I'm in doubt, and after this chapter you'll be able to do the same.

The basic premise of the glycemic index is that the lower the number is, the better a food is for you, and I generally agree with this. If you followed the link above to the chart on the Harvard website, you may be able to find some of your favorite foods listed.

Also notice that vegetables have a low glycemic index, while snack foods seem to be way up there on the scale.

Kind of makes sense, doesn't it? The foods that are higher in processed sugar, and those that are capable of spiking your blood-glucose levels, have the higher numbers, while foods that have more controlled rate of release for glucose seem to have the lower numbers.

But not everything is that cut and dried in life, is it? What about the good old potato? The poor guy appears everywhere, and tastes so good in so many different dishes.

But he is absolutely vilified on the glycemic index, higher than even glucose itself on some charts!

That's why it's important to also consider the glycemic load of the food you're eating as well. Glycemic load is another calculation that I refuse to do. (Can you tell math is not my favorite subject?)

Glycemic load takes into account both the type and also the amount of the carbohydrate you're consuming.

If you're a healthy adult, eating a mini candy bar is not likely to raise your glycemic index all that much. If you eat a dozen, that's entirely a different story, and that's where the glycemic load comes in.

I want to emphasize that the Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load charts are a great help when trying to gauge your sugar intake, but there can be many flaws in the system as well.

For instance, glycemic index data is not readily available for every single type of food yet, even though this system has been in place for over twenty years.

Also, as we mentioned above, foods can have very different values depending upon how much they're cooked, etc.

My advice is to use it as a rough guide and use your common sense as well. I do refer to it all the time after having committed so much of it to memory, but I understand that we have to live our lives too, and to be too rigid and strict when trying to eliminate certain foods is only asking for trouble.

I do want to mention how the GI can lead to overeating of certain foods if you strictly use it as an end-all-be-all bible.

One famous example mentions peanuts versus apples. The glycemic index number for apples is in the 30s, while for peanuts it's in the teens. And the glycemic load for peanuts is virtually nothing, leading you to believe that it's a better snack for you, or you may be able to eat all that you want.

But the calorie count in peanuts compared to apples is way off; peanuts have many more calories, so if you're trying to lose weight they may not be the best snack choice.

I hope I've been able to clear up a few things for you regarding glycemic load and glycemic index.

It really is pretty basic when you break it down, and science mixed with a good dose of common sense goes a long way toward understanding nutrition.

Chapter 6 - Artificial Sweeteners

Oh wow! Can you imagine? We have another controversial subject in the world of nutrition!

Numerous studies and entire books have been written on the evils associated with artificial sweeteners, so I think it's only right that we touch on the subject here to shed some light on the various ones available and the benefits and hazards they present. But don't worry, this chapter will be short and SWEET...

After all, this stuff is everywhere now, from chewing gum to diet soda, baked goods and even ice cream.

Cutting calories to lose weight is nothing new, but deciding where to do the cuts has always been up for debate.

And reducing your sugar intake is, or at least should be, high on everyone's list these days, so it seems it would only make sense that a substitute for sugar should be in your everyday routine.

I begrudgingly acknowledge that these sugar substitutes do have their place in the nutrition world, even though I believe the jury is still out on whether or not they are healthy to consume in large quantities.

Once again, educating yourself is the key to success within any area of nutrition.

The opponents of sugar substitutes make a number of good points to support their case. First and foremost, all these fake sugars on the market are of course artificial. That means they're probably derived from sugar, although some come from plants, but they have chemicals added during processing that enhance the sweetness. Indeed, some of these products are 8,000 times sweeter than sugar!

And I think we'd all agree that putting any chemicals in our body is counterproductive to us trying to get healthier. As a matter of fact, with the exception of aspartame, these substances cannot be broken down by our bodies and add no nutritional value.

If you look into things a bit deeper, you'll see people that claim a lot of these products were not tested thoroughly, and that we don't know the long term effects of some of these.

New artificial sweeteners enter the market all the time, and the reason for this is there's not one that's perfect for every situation. Take sucralose, or Splenda©, for example.

Splenda© stands up to heat well and can be used as a sugar substitute in baking, whereas other sweeteners can't take the heat as much.

How about sorbitol? You'll find it in plenty of sugar free candies and even in no-sugar ice cream, but this one is funny, because it's almost as high in calories as regular sugar.

Aspartame is one of the most famous ones, found in diet sodas and yogurt, pudding and packets of sugar substitute like Equal©

If you're getting the idea that artificial sugar is found just about everywhere, you are right on target. It's pervasive within our society, and it's almost impossible to avoid getting some of these with our daily diet.

More of the hidden dangers, according to opponents of artificial sweeteners, include cancer, brain tumors, nervous disorders and even Alzheimer's disease.

Tests on laboratory rats seem to support this, with the most famous being the saccharin study in the late 70s. During the study, rats that ingested saccharin were developing bladder cancer. After that point, products containing saccharin needed labels displaying the hazards associated with ingesting the substance.

Lo and behold, in the year 2000 these labels were removed because it was determined that rats have a substance in their bodies that could react with the saccharin and cause tumors. Since this isn't present in humans, it was determined to be safe for consumption.

You can see how complicated and controversial this subject can be.

One other point I'll make briefly for the cause against the artificial substances is that they could encourage overconsumption. Just because something is advertised as sugar free, people automatically assume they can eat as much as they want and this simply isn't true.

In fact, as we mentioned above, some of the sweeteners still contain some calories, so do be careful when choosing which sugar-free items to add to your daily routine.

Now for the good stuff, or so it seems.

Dieters have long-embraced the use of artificial sweeteners as a way to cut calories when they're trying to lose weight, and these products fill the bill of satisfying your sweet tooth while keeping the calorie count down.

In particular, these products have been beneficial to diabetics who cannot have any extra sugar in their diet, but still have an urge to satisfy their sweet tooth. Artificial sweeteners don't really raise blood sugar levels because they contain no carbohydrates.

Some people don't notice the taste of these products, while other have trouble adjusting to the "aftertaste" that sugar substitutes leave behind.

Some artificial sweeteners are perfect for things like gum and candy, because they don't contribute to tooth decay. Xylitol falls into this category and is widely used in these products.

If you're not convinced about the merits of sugar substitutes, and I fall into this group of people, there's still hope for you and me.

We have options, and although you will find opponents and supporters no matter which path you choose, natural sugar substitutes seem like a better way to go to me.

Products that fall into this category include honey, coconut sugar, date sugar, maple syrup, and brown rice syrup, to name a few.

They all have their own benefits and drawbacks. Let's take the brown rice syrup as an example.

This is just as it sounds. The syrup is made from boiling brown rice. The end product is wheat and gluten free and can even be used on waffles and pancakes. It goes especially well in baked goods.

Maple syrup is another sugar alternative that works well in lots of cooking situations. Just be sure to buy the best you can, like a pure, organic variety.

So the bottom line is the jury is still out on a lot of this stuff.

There certainly are uses for sugar substitutes if you're trying to cut calories, but given the fact that they are so hard to avoid these days, how much is too much?

It's obviously up to you what you put in your body, but for me I just try to stick with all natural substances as much as I can.

I know these days it's hard to avoid, but if you know where the stuff lurks, then you can do your best to avoid it.

See? Short and sweet!

Next let's take a look at ways to curb those sugar cravings.

Chapter 7 - Sugar Substitutes To Curb Your Cravings

I've been trying to curb my sugar cravings for years now, and I still get almost uncontrollable urges from time to time. I'll admit, they're far less frequent than before, but I'm surprised sometimes that I still have a hankering for sweets. It's a pretty strong addiction.

I understand fully about your sweet tooth and how strong the pull is, so let's examine some ways to curb your cravings and make it easier to cut the excess sugar out of your life.

Exercise – The number one way I have found to take my mind off sugar cravings, or any food cravings for that matter, is exercise. I can hear you groaning now, and believe me I'm no workout fanatic, but I'm not talking about running a marathon here.

A nice walk at a quick pace is all it takes to release some endorphins that will help you stop your cravings and make you feel better overall. Endorphins can decrease your perception of pain, but they also are responsible for triggering a sense of happiness in your brain.

There are also a number of other side effects of exercise, such as increased physical fitness, reduction in stress levels, improving your muscle tone, and even helping you to sleep better.

The next time you're craving a candy bar or cupcake, take your mind off of it by walking briskly for 20 minutes. If you work indoors and can't get outside too often, try a walk around the interior of the building. Any sort of physical activity can help ward off your urgings for a piece of chocolate.

Healthy Breakfast – Most breakfasts consist of something sugar-filled or carbohydrate-laden. At least that's the way it used to be for me. And then I couldn't figure out why I was craving more food in an hour.

In my opinion, a healthy breakfast consists of proteins, healthy fats and all the nutrients you can pack in. Smoothies are excellent for this because you can combine all these into a tasty treat that takes no time to make and will fill you full of energy to start your day.

The sugar in donuts, muffins, and other so-called breakfast foods will have you dragging halfway through the morning.

I realize that many people start their day with a slug of oatmeal, and this can be an excellent option, but just make sure you check the label for any added sugar.

A healthy breakfast will curb your cravings, so remember to start your day off right.

Keep Good Stuff Handy – Well, this seems to be the ultimate no-brainer, but I want to mention it because sometimes we get too busy or in my case, too darned lazy, to make sure we always have sugar alternatives at the ready.

It's so easy to reach for a candy bar when you pass by someone's desk at work, or grab a sweet treat out of the vending machine. That's when we need to muster our willpower and shake off the urges.

If you have something like an orange or bag of almonds or peanuts nearby, it will be much easier to say no to these temptations.

Raw veggies will hang out all day on your desk or in your lunch box just waiting for an opportunity to satisfy your sugar craving. You can jazz these up with a low-fat cream cheese or even some heart-healthy avocado.

Getting this done will take a commitment on your part, that's for sure. But I know from experience that prepping for the next day only takes me 5-10 minutes at night, and I've built it into my schedule now because I want to be healthy and cut down on sugar.

Let's do this, people. It's time to get serious!

No Substitutions – When trying to eliminate as much extra sugar as possible, you may be tempted to mix in some sugar substitutes as a way of satisfying your sweet tooth. I would caution against this for the following reasons.

First of all, substituting one sweet for another will not do anything to drive your cravings into submission, and that's really what we're trying to do here. If you absolutely must add a sweetener, choose the healthiest one you can find, and choose organic whenever possible.

I recommend against substituting because studies have shown that consuming too much artificial sugar can actually lead to weight gain. I know it sounds counterintuitive, but consider this.

Consuming too much fake sugar could lead to a person becoming numb to other foods. In other words, other types of fruits and vegetables, even though they might be on the sweeter side, would seem less satisfying over time.

This in turn could lead to deterioration in your diet as you seek out more and more artificial flavorings to satisfy your ever-increasing need for sweet stuff.

Drink Water – Remember to drink plenty of water during the day. Not only is this good for your skin and overall health, it's a way to make you feel full and possibly cut the cravings.

Some folks love flavored water as it's a little more satisfying than regular bottled water. If you choose this path, and I know you're probably sick of hearing this by now, but you have to read the label to make sure you're not getting extra sugar with that extra flavor.

Eat Frequently – If you wait too long between meals your hunger will get the best of you. I used to do this, and because I didn't feel full, I figured I could squeeze in a candy bar without too many ill effects. How's that for logic??

The truth is that if your blood sugar falls too low, and it will if you go too long without food, you'll be very tempted to reach for something sugary to satisfy your hunger.

Instead of skipping meals or waiting too long, eat 4 or 5 small meals a day to keep your blood sugar from dropping.

The best way to keep that full feeling is to take in protein rich foods such as nuts and seeds, meats and yogurts.

You can also look for fiber filled foods like apples, pears, broccoli and all kinds of other fruits and veggies.

The main thing is to keep healthy foods at the ready at all times, and don't go too long without eating something good for you.

If you like to spend time in the kitchen cooking or baking, you're probably wondering what type of substitutions you can make for sugar and artificial sweeteners in some of your recipes.

Nature has a way of taking care of us, and there are replacements for practically every situation. Let's take a look at a few that you can put to work immediately as you work towards becoming as sugar free as possible.

Maple syrup can be substituted in a lot of places, but you need to make sure you're using the all-natural, organic variety instead of something you might find on the shelf at the supermarket. I know it's a lot more expensive, but hey, are we really putting a price tag on our health here? Besides, it tastes so much better!

You can typically replace a cup of table sugar in any recipe with two thirds to three quarters of a cup of maple syrup. You may need to do a little experimenting at first, but you'll get the hang of it pretty quickly. You may also need to reduce the overall liquid in a baking recipe.

The sweet taste will still be present, but you'll be swapping something with a high glycemic index for something much lower on the scale.

Honey is also a recommended substitute for sugar in lots of places. Honey has many benefits and good properties associated with it, but make sure to keep it away from children under one year of age. Be careful, though, because honey has more calories than sugar.

Stevia is a plant based derivative that gets a lot of press these days. About 300 times sweeter than table sugar, all it takes is a little bit to sweeten your tea or coffee. It comes in powder or liquid form and the liquid will last for months. Although a bit on the expensive side, it can be worth it when you're trying to cut the sugar and looking for more natural alternatives.

Cinnamon is a wonderful spice and can be used almost everywhere, in my opinion. I put some in my coffee most mornings, and never miss the sugar I used to shovel in. It has a way of convincing your taste buds that something sweet is involved.

Cinnamon also has great health benefits, including controlling blood sugar levels, supplying antioxidants, and reducing inflammation.

Please note that these benefits may not be the results of lengthy studies, rather from personal experiences of long-time users of cinnamon, and cinnamon should not be used as a means to alleviate any of these symptoms and maladies, but rather as a spice to enhance your food.

chapter 8 - Will Power

Your life, if it's anything at all like mine, is filled with all sorts of things that tempt you on a daily basis.

When summertime is here, it's all I can do to get my daily duties done instead of grabbing a fishing rod and heading out to the lake to pursue one of my favorite pastimes.

All year long, but especially around the holidays, it's all the different foods and flavors that are calling my name.

Even while writing this book, and as important as it is for me to get this information into your hands so you can begin to take action, I'm constantly besieged by thoughts of checking my email or logging onto Facebook.

Whatever the season, there's something or someone always seeming to pull me in the wrong direction.

I believe it was Oscar Wilde who wrote the famous quote "I can resist anything except temptation". And in my case, truer words were never spoken.

I say all this to illustrate the point that I haven't always had the best willpower all my life, but if I can learn to overcome temptations then I assure you there is hope for each and every one of you out there as well.

I've read some articles that claim that your willpower is like a muscle, and the more you train it, the stronger it will become. I believe this to be true, at least in my case.

One of the keys I've found to increasing willpower is actually counterintuitive. It involves planning my day according to traps and pitfalls I know I might encounter, and this simple step helps me to avoid lots of trouble.

Let me give you a couple of examples.

There's an all-you-can-eat Chinese food buffet right down the street from me, and guess what? Yes, I used to be a frequent flyer there.

One simple thing I changed to avoid this trap is to simply change my route when I leave the house, whether on foot or by car. I just try not to pass by that place anymore. And believe me, it works.

By changing my pattern or habit, I have been able to avoid this trap most of the time.

I'm also very distracted by the television, especially when I'm trying to write.

Now, I do all my writing in a spare room we have upstairs, and there's no TV in there, or any other distractions, for that matter. It's the only way I can focus and get my required writing done for the day.

I simply eliminate the distractions, and I have to use much less of my willpower right out of the gate.

It works like a charm for me, and I suggest you try the same thing.

For trying to cut down on your sugar intake, it could mean not having any close at hand, or always having a healthy snack available in case someone brings in a cake for a co-worker's birthday.

Stressed Out - Another important asset you can have when it comes to increasing your willpower is learning to manage your stress levels.

Constantly being under stress is very taxing to your body. Not only does it take a toll physically, but it's mentally exhausting as well.

When you're under stress, you make decisions that are not always the best scenario for you, because they are based on short term results rather than long term outcomes.

You can circumvent this in the short term by knowing the signs of when you're stressed out and by taking a moment to try and relax a bit before you make an important decision.

This can be done by taking a few deep breathes, or removing yourself from the situation for a moment so you can gather your thoughts.

Pay attention to what relaxes you. Maybe it's music, or talking a walk outside. Whatever it is, try to use it to your advantage when you're faced with a decision that requires you to be mentally alert in the moment.

And while you're at it, reducing your overall stress is a great way to increase your health. Stress taxes your body constantly, so find something that works for you and practice it every day.

Mine happens to be meditation, but yours might be yoga or even vigorous exercise. I'm a big fan of whatever works, so try different things until you hit upon your relaxation zone. It'll help in all areas of your life.

That actually brings us to one of the best and most recommended ways to increase your willpower: Exercise.

Get Up And Move - Yes, I know exercise is a dirty word, and most people don't want to hear it, but I'm afraid it's true. Exercise will definitely increase your willpower.

The reason is that it takes all kinds of willpower to get off the couch and get to the gym. And once you get there, you'll probably be tempted to cut your workout regimen short because it's such a nice day out, or you have so many other things to do.

But you don't. You stick it out and finish your routine, pushing through the physical pain and mental anguish because you know how good it is for you.

And doing so increases your ability to resist those cupcakes or cookies they sometimes place at the front desk of the gym, because as you were flexing your biceps and triceps, you were also exercising your brain by using willpower to get to the gym in the first place, and to finish what you started by going all the way through your routine.

Remember, the more you exercise your willpower, the stronger it will become.

Imagine That - Another great way to increase your willpower is to try and strengthen your imagination.

I've been told I have a very vivid imagination, and if you're in the same boat, why not use it your advantage?

The idea is to imagine something else whenever an unhealthy temptation comes lurking about. For instance, you could imagine yourself laying on the beach in a bathing suit whenever you walk by that candy bowl at work. Or think of the last time you had a great meal at a nice restaurant instead of sticking coins in the vending machine to grab a candy bar.

Anything that takes your mind someplace else at the time of temptation will work. I know this will take some practice to perfect, but it really is effective.

Healthy Habits - Still another way to strengthen your self-control is to develop good habits and then stick with them.

This can range from a daily walk to having the discipline necessary to pack your lunch and all those healthy snacks every day.

Good intentions don't cut it in this case, because I have the best intentions in the world right up until the time I actually peel the wrapper off the cupcake and get the frosting all over my fingers.

Habits are a result of making a plan and then sticking to that plan and seeing through to execution. Over and then over again.

Developing good habits will pay off mentally and physically, because there's a great sense of satisfaction you get when you know you're setting things right. You are in control of your destiny when you are doing things right, and your daily habits will reinforce these good thoughts.

When you give in to temptation, you feel as though you have lost control, and it can be discouraging.

Going back to what we discussed before, remember to try and avoid situations that will cause you to exercise your willpower in the first place.

Research has shown that you have a finite supply of willpower in place on any given day, and the more temptations you face, the more likely you are to give in as you continue to be tested.

So it's not necessarily the amount of willpower you have, as in 18 hours worth of the stuff, but the strength of your willpower for the time it is available.

Another point I'd like to make is about giving in to temptation when it comes to eliminating sugar. I have a secret for you. Are you ready?

It's not always possible.

There, I said it, and I feel better now. Please hear me out.

I believe the reason that diets fail so many times is because people are too rigid with what they're attempting to accomplish. I think that denying yourself certain things can work for a while, but eventually you will give in, because as we discussed, willpower is not an infinite resource.

So give in, already. Reward yourself for good behavior.

Have that mini candy bar or whatever you choose for a sweet indulgence.

You won't do any good constantly denying yourself, and sooner or later you'll give in and eat a whole bag of cookies or box of chocolates to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Here's an experiment for you.

Go ahead and buy a cupcake or donut that you really enjoy. Make sure it's one of your favorites. But before you eat it, consider this.

Eat half, and share the other half with someone else.

If you can do this, you're really gaining some self-control and flexing your willpower. This is quite a test, and if you pass this you're well on your way to kicking the sugar habit for good.

If you eat the whole thing, don't be too hard on yourself. It just means that you have things to work on. And we're all a work in progress, right?

I don't mean to make this sound as though it's an everyday thing. Use your own judgment about when the best time is to give yourself a reward.

I just know from personal experience that being too strict with your efforts will only set you up for failure at some point.

So give yourself a break, you deserve it!

Next we'll take a look at doing your own detox, and the easy steps you can take to get started.
Let's go!

Chapter 9 - Doing Your Own Sugar Detox

It's detox time! Let's take a look at what's involved with doing your own sugar detox, and what to expect along the way.

First of all, I know the word detox carries a lot of bad vibes with it. I'm sure you've had friends who have done some sort of detox in the past, whether it be a juice cleanse or a purge of some sort, and they've probably relayed some stories of how difficult it might be when going through it.

Let me assure you that detoxing from sugar, even though it's nothing trivial, is nowhere near as tough as some of these liquid-only cleanses that seem to be so popular these days.

The type and severity of your symptoms when withdrawing from sugar can vary a great deal. A lot depends on how long you've been consuming sugar, what your daily consumption level is, and your individual makeup.

Just some of the symptoms you could see include cravings, headaches, skin problems, anxiety, depression, mood swings, and even changes in your sleeping habits, just to name the major ones.

Don't be deterred by this, even though it sounds scary. Most of the symptoms are short-lived, like a couple of weeks. And also remember that doing a "cold-turkey" detox will bring about much more severe symptoms than the gentle, thoughtful detox you're about to undertake.

Your Journal - The first thing we need to do when trying to eliminate sugar is to begin keeping a food journal. I know I alluded to this earlier in the book, but I believe this step is absolutely essential, and I recommend you start immediately. In fact, before you begin your detox you should try to record a week's worth of meals and snacks so you can actually determine where your extra sugar is coming from.

Don't skimp on this, really get down to the nitty gritty. Use your cell phone to photograph food labels for the nutritional info. Write everything down in a notebook and analyze things at the end of the week.

Not only will this be a real eye-opener for you, it will also give you specific areas to focus in on. You'll know exactly where your added sugar is coming from.

Once you have all the information at your fingertips we can proceed.

Elimination - The first step in our quest to eliminate sugar should be to actually eliminate it. I know this sounds too simple to be effective, but the first step really needs to be a good housecleaning. And don't forget your office drawers too.

Go through everything and be ruthless. Read the labels on stuff you're unsure of, and toss everything you know is on our bad list.

Out of sight, out of mind, is the old saying, and this can be a stretch when it comes to sugar addiction, because I think it's as much a mental as a physical thing and it's sometimes tough to get it out of your mind. But the plain truth is, if there's no sugar within easy access, chances are greater you won't be able to cheat.

Decide On Your Method - You'll find some detox plans that recommend going cold turkey, giving up all sugar immediately and completely.

If you can do this, more power to you, but remember, your body does need sugar to function correctly, so it's impossible to give up all sugar. We're really talking about added sugar here, so we'll concentrate on that.

I think you already know my thoughts on this, but if not let's go over my reasoning again. I believe cold turkey is too drastic an approach and is doomed for failure from the start. Your body never reacts well to drastic changes anyway, and trying to keep up with this type of regimen may be setting yourself up for massive disappointment.

Remember that this is not a short term strategy we're going for here, but rather a long term solution to your sugar addiction.

Retrain Your Brain - We've already talked about substitutes for sugar, and the ones that some people think are just as bad for you as the real thing.

Now it's time to explore naturally sweet fruits and other alternatives that nature provides every day for us. Let me give you a few examples.

Some berries are among the sweetest of fruits. Take the blueberry, for instance. Aside from packing a great antioxidant punch, these little beauties can really give your sweet tooth the jolt it needs.

Ted's Tip: *Here's a good one for you to start your day off right.*

If you like oatmeal, you will really love this one.

Get the organic steel cut oatmeal, with nothing added. You probably know by now that the instant oatmeal can be very high in added sugar, so although they do have so low-sugar varieties out there, I think you'll enjoy the real stuff more.

Prepare the oatmeal as the package recommends.

We're adding some zing to it this morning, so next, make a simple blueberry puree that takes only 2 minutes and is oh-so-tasty! You can definitely make this ahead of time, too.

All you need is 1 cup of blueberries, about a teaspoon of lemon juice, a couple tablespoons of water, and maybe a pinch of cinnamon to really bring it alive. Note that some recipes call for adding some sugar as well, but we won't be needing that!

Add this all to a blender and puree until smooth. You can then top your oatmeal with this mixture instead of any type of added sugar, and let your taste buds dance!

And this puree mixture will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

Begin lessening the amount of sugar you add to things like cereal and coffee and tea. Start slowly and give your body and taste buds time to react and adjust, and before you know it you won't be adding any extra sugar to these items.

I used this method to get rid of caffeine and it really worked well. I used half decaf and half regular coffee for a few weeks, and gradually reduced the amount of regular coffee until I couldn't tell the difference anymore, and suddenly one day I didn't need the caffeine.

I have to admit that the side effects from withdrawing from caffeine can be pretty nasty, and I had tried to quit it cold turkey on a previous occasion without any luck at all so I can attest to the fact that the gradual method does work.

Send In The Substitutes - At this point you should also be thinking about what types of substitutions you can begin making in your daily routine that will begin to reduce your overall sugar intake.

Remember that if you must choose a sugar substitute, choose the absolute best and safest one you can find.

Right now a lot of people are recommending Stevia©, and if I had to choose one this is what I would go with as well. New products such as Truvia© hold great promise as well, because the manufacturer has found a way to remove the aftertaste that goes along with Stevia©.

I'm not a big supporter of these because of reasons we discussed earlier, but if you absolutely cannot get by without some sort of sweetener, I'll admit that one that doesn't spike your blood sugar levels is a better choice.

Substituting for desserts is easy for me, and I hope to make it easy for you as well.

Fruits of just about all kinds can be switched in for sticky, gooey desserts without too much harm. Remember to consult your glycemic index chart until you have a few of these memorized.

Anything with a score of under 55 on the glycemic index chart is considered low, and chances are that consuming moderate amounts will not increase your blood sugar levels dramatically.

Strawberries come in at around 40 and make an excellent dessert instead of a piece of strawberry-rhubarb pie or a brownie. You just have to get used to living a bit differently, and making a few adjustments is well worth it where your health is concerned.

Some other tasty fruits that have a passing score on the chart include raspberries, blueberries, and one of my all-time favorites, mangoes. How sweet it is!!

Please remember also that the glycemic index chart is just a guide for you, and a pretty darned good guide at that, but you will also find a large number of people who think it's a very flawed way of looking at things. And some of them make good points.

Use the glycemic index chart – and glycemic load data – as guides in your overall dieting plan. It's a good way to get an idea about foods, but make sure you take into account the amount you're eating and also how often you consume these foods.

One of my favorite fruits has become the lowly pear. Don't get me wrong, I still enjoy my apples, but pears are a great source of the two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble, as well as being lower in calories than apples.

Poaching or steaming pears will make them even sweeter, and if you sprinkle a bit of cinnamon on them you'll have a world class dessert that is actually good for you!

One more bit of information here. Some sugar detox books and experts will recommend you stay away from ALL fruits, as they can be very high in sugar, but remember that we said when you take in carbohydrates along with the fiber in the fruits, it slows down the body's breakdown of carbs, allowing for a slower release of glucose into your bloodstream.

Hardcore sugar detox experts draw a sharp line in the sand. I take a less firm, more realistic approach.

Who is right?

Well, both. And neither. Whatever is right for you is what you should do, but you know how I feel about it.

What about a substitute for soda? If you drink a lot of soda, knock it off.

Seriously, it's the only thing I have to take a really hard line with. The regular soda is just too much sugar for anyone's good, and the diet stuff is more like a scientific concoction than a refreshing drink.

Yes, I know how good they taste. I used to be an addict. But if I can kick it to the curb, so can you, and here's how.

Ted's Tip: *When you're at home this is pretty easy. I recommend you cut up fruits like oranges and lemons and limes and fill an ice cube tray with these goodies, then add water and freeze.*

When you have an urge for a soda, go to the freezer and get some of these ice cubes and fill up a glass with water. Instant flavor!

You can also simply add oranges slices and lemon and lime chunks to a regular glass of water to kick up the taste a little.

Use your imagination here as well, because the possibilities are limitless.

Pass The Protein, Please: No, that doesn't mean pass the protein by. It means that you should be seeking protein at just about every meal, because it does a number of things to assist you in your quest to eliminate sugar.

Remember that protein has a minimal impact on your blood sugar level, so it's a good choice for meals and snacks. Things like nuts and seeds are wonderful snacks that taste great and also give you a feeling of fullness so you won't be hungry again in twenty minutes, like you would if you at a candy bar.

As far as lunches and dinners are concerned, we've already discussed where a lot of added sugar comes from, namely, anything boxed, bagged, or canned.

I realize that it can be difficult to control all that you're eating, especially while you're out or at work, but by knowing what foods to avoid and which to enjoy you'll be able to minimize your sugar intake.

So make sure you choose a whole wheat bread if bread is on the menu. Other healthy choices include lean meats and fish, beans and lentils, and yogurts and cheeses.

When you're eating out, don't be limited by what you see on the menu. If your meal happens to come with mounds of mashed potatoes or big scoops of rice, you can always ask to substitute another vegetable if you feel as though you're over your carb limit for the day.

Remember that your body converts most carbs into glucose, which then of course enters your blood stream. While not all carbs are bad, limiting your intake of the "bad" ones is definitely a good idea.

Picking fiber-rich foods like leafy greens, squashes, and beans can be a great way to feel full and also get all the necessary vitamins and minerals your body really needs. There is a saying among nutritionists: Green Means Fiber. That's an easy one to remember!

The more great tasting and healthy foods you eat, the more your body and taste buds will adapt and conform to these types of foods. Your body will gradually stop craving the sweet treats and zero in on what's healthy and good for you.

This may sound impossible at the moment, but you will soon see that your unique combination of willpower and self-control, coupled with your desire to succeed at becoming as healthy as you possibly can, will overpower your perceived need for all the extra sugar you've been consuming.

Combine that with the knowledge you're now armed with after reading this book, and you are unstoppable!

Chapter 10 - Partner Up For Success

I'm going to keep this chapter extremely short, because the message is clear and succinct.

We've come a long way now, and I want you to have the best chance at success with all the new information you've learned, so bearing that in mind, it's time to partner up!

I'm sure you've heard the old saying, "there's strength in numbers", right? These words are especially meaningful when it comes to any sort of dieting or changing habits.

I've actually used this approach with great success when it comes to modifying my diet, writing computer programs and also doing research for books.

I'm sure you know at least one other friend who feels the same way you do about eliminating sugar, and it would be a great benefit to you to find a like-minded individual so you can share stories, trade recipes or ideas about substitutions, or just commiserate when you feel urges for candy bars and cupcakes.

Dieting is better in pairs because you can share encouragement and downfalls, and while this really isn't a diet, because I hate that word, it is a lifestyle change that shouldn't be taken lightly or approached with half-hearted enthusiasm.

Having at least one partner will up your chances of succeeding dramatically, and who knows? If you get enough people interested you could form a small group that's dedicated to healthy eating in general, with the specific intent of eliminating as much processed sugar from your daily routine as possible.

You could actually make this a fun thing by getting as many friends as possible on board, and then scheduling regular get-togethers where you can exchange stories, swap recipes, etc.

It might sound corny to you, but just think of all the successful programs that employ this technique. One I'm sure you're familiar with is Weight Watchers©. They have employed this partnering or group technique with great success.

There have been studies of how effective it is to be partnered up with one or more people versus going it alone when it comes to dieting, and there are sharp differences both in the number of people completing a dieting program as well as those who have keep weight off after the program ended.

Just like anything in life, commitment to a program or regimen means you'll ultimately have a better chance of being successful. Well, I firmly believe that partnering up is a great way of holding yourself accountable, and this can be a great motivator to keep going.

Another good point is that if you're still keeping your journal of daily consumption, and I think you should be, then you can have someone else read it to point out problem areas that they see. It may also be something that helps point out solutions to some problems they may be having.

It's good to know you're not alone, especially if you're struggling, and that's when your buddy or group will be the most beneficial. Sometimes during a struggle or particularly trying time, it's nice to know you can reach out to someone who may be going through the exact same things you are, someone who understands what the detoxing from sugar feels like both mentally and physically.

Don't be fooled. What you're about to accomplish is not trivial by any means, but it's totally worthwhile to do because your overall health is being impacted by the excess sugar in your diet, whether you realize it or not.

Why wouldn't you give yourself the best chance possible at succeeding with a sugar detox?

As far as picking the right person or group, it should be someone you're totally comfortable with, because you could be discussing things you may not like sharing with casual acquaintances. Ideally, it would be a spouse or significant other, because it's easy to get positive reinforcement from someone close to you because they naturally want you to succeed.

Please give the partner method some serious thought. I speak from experience when I tell you this works well.

I would hate to see you invest the time it takes to read this book and go through all the necessary actions required to eliminate processed sugar, and then be unsuccessful because of some easy step you can take.

Okay, that's the extent of the preaching. Let's move on to a more in depth look at some of the foods you should be trying to avoid, as well as those that will help you in your quest to detox from unnecessary sugar.

Chapter 11 - Foods To Embrace – Foods To Avoid

Well, we've come a long way haven't we? Let's wrap things up by creating a listing of foods to avoid while you're detoxing from sugar, and also some foods that will assist you in your quest to be sugar-free.

Altered States - No, not the movie. We're talking about processed sugar, and all the various forms it comes in. Earlier in the book I promised you a giant list of all the aliases that sugar hides behind, and here it is.

- Sugar
- Raw Sugar
- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Date Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Molasses
- Turbinado Sugar
- Sorbitol
- Rice Syrup
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Maltose
- Cane Juice Crystals
- Glucose
- Glucose Solids
- Sucrose
- Diatase
- Beet Sugar
- Corn Syrup
- Corn Syrup Solids
- Icing Sugar
- Dextran
- Golden Syrup
- Caramel
- Lactose
- Maple Syrup
- Cane Sugar
- Galactose

- Fruit Juice
- Fruit Juice Concentrate
- Invert Sugar
- Confectioner's Sugar
- Buttered Syrup
- Ethyl Maltol
- Golden Sugar
- Grape Sugar
- Malt Syrup
- Carob Syrup
- Barley Malt
- Refiner's Syrup
- Yellow Sugar

Phew! These are the major and most common ones, but I know there are more you can dig up.

Pretty shocking, isn't it? No wonder people give up on reading food labels!

You don't have to necessarily memorize all these different variations of sugar, but it wouldn't hurt to commit to memory some of the most notorious offenders.

Another good practice to go by is to look out for anything that ends in –OSE. Any of these items near the top of the list should be an indication you'll want to stay clear of them. Remember we said that the closer to the top of the list an item is, the higher the amount in the product.

Other things to generally avoid in your daily diet are dried fruit, jams and jellies, canned fruits in syrup, instant gravies (check the labels!), ice cream and frozen yogurt, and any kinds of cookies, cakes and pies.

This doesn't mean that they are out of your life forever. At some point you can treat yourself, as we discussed earlier in the book. Let's be realistic here.

But while you're doing your detox, these should be avoided at all costs, and consumed very sparingly otherwise.

As far as eating good foods, free from processed sugar, it's pretty simple.

Stay as all-natural as you can. This is not as difficult as it sounds, although our hurry-up, on-the-go lifestyles have made things tougher on us. If you look around at the advertisements on television as well as all the food packaging and labeling, you can easily see that we're all geared for convenience and speed these days, as opposed to healthy and nutritious.

I know it's easier to toss something into the microwave than it is to actually peel a vegetable and then steam it for 10 minutes. I've been down that road and sometimes, depending on how hectic life gets, I still rely on pre-packaged and "instant" food items to get over a rough patch. But those days are few and far between now, and I'll tell you why.

Two words. Planning and commitment.

You really have to commit to a healthier lifestyle for this to work. Yes, it's a bit more inconvenient to use all fresh ingredients for your meals. And it's definitely easier to buy something out of the work cafeteria or to zip into the drive-thru lane at your favorite fast food joint.

But once you get used to eating in a different way your body will become accustomed to having healthy, nutritious food instead of the chemical-laden, sugar-fortified offerings you've been consuming.

By commitment I mean really making a huge effort, not some half-hearted attempt, because this is your health we're talking about here, and there are few things in life that are more important than this. It's the springboard from where everything else launches, like good relationships, quality of life for you, a positive mental attitude, and, well, you get the idea!

The planning part is almost equally as important, because proper planning will prevent a lot of spur-of-the-moment decisions that might not be the best for you.

If you always have something healthy close at hand, and your willpower is strong, then you're much less likely to commit a crime of improper nutrition.

Planning means packing a nutritious lunch and some healthy snacks at home the night before a workday. It means prepping for the week so you know what your meals are ahead of time and you're not just "whipping something up".

It also means maybe scouting the restaurant menu before you go out to eat so if you have to research anything you can do that without making a snap decision. Most major chain restaurants now have all the nutritional information listed on their websites for easy access. Of course, after reading this book you should be an expert at picking and choosing the best possible items for you.

Proper planning will be instrumental in your success, I promise you, so please consider this part as a necessity.

Staying Strong - You may feel like giving up at some point, because the path of least resistance is always so tempting. Doing what has become habit is always easiest.

You may also feel some moderately intense physical side effects when going through your detox, as we mentioned in a previous chapter. Remember that they could include irritability, cravings for sweets, and even skin irritations.

Remind yourself that these are temporary, and give your detox buddy a call or text, if you were lucky enough to be able to partner up with someone. Sometimes a little encouragement from someone who knows what you're going through can make all the difference.

Remind yourself why you want to detox from sugar in the first place, and if need be re-read the beginning chapters of this book again to reacquaint yourself with the negative effects processed sugar has on your health.

It could take 3-4 weeks of clean eating to set your body on the right path. But what I want you to remember, and what I really hope you take away from this book, is that it's not a one month commitment to becoming as sugar free as possible.

This is about a lifestyle change, not some silly diet or detox method. What you consume on a daily basis really matters, and the more healthy and nutritious the food is, the more good it will do for your body.

You have to admit that this is common sense. And while you may have a bit more flexibility when you're younger, you will not be able to get away with disregarding proper nutrition forever. Take it from the voice of experience.

Let's get in this for the long haul, because when you do, you'll really begin to notice changes, not just in the way you feel, but in all areas of your life.

You owe it to yourself and the people around you to be the healthiest you can possibly be.

Thank you very much for purchasing this book and for hanging in there with me to the end. I promise you'll notice a difference in your health and your life if you'll simply commit to learning about the foods you're eating and paying attention to all the incidental sugar you take in during the day.

Remember to consult with your doctor or healthcare professional before embarking on any radical changes in your diet or exercise routine.

I'm not a medical professional and can't offer any sort of medical advice.

I appreciate you spending time with me, and please don't forget to [sign up for my email list](#) so you can get some delicious recipes to get you started, as well as advance notification of all my upcoming books. You'll also get a notice every time I update information in any of the books.

Most of my books are FREE for the first few days of publication, so being on the list has lots of advantages. And I won't bother you with email unless I have something important to say.

You can also unsubscribe at any time.

To Your Great Health!

Ted Begnoche

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