

[IMAGE]

Death by Sugar

Can sugar be deadly? According to recent buzz, yes. For the past few years sugar has received negative press and has been blamed for everything including obesity, heart disease to cancer.

Because sugar consumption has tripled worldwide, many researchers and doctors are now calling sugar "toxic" for our overall health.

Case in point - in a recent issue of Nature the authors went as far as calling for regulation for sugar similar to the ones in place for alcohol and tobacco. According to the report, sugar meets the same criteria for regulation as alcohol, because it's unavoidable, there's potential for abuse, it's toxic, and it negatively impacts society. They wrote that sugar is added to so many processed foods that it's everywhere, and people eat up to 500 calories per day in added sugar alone. Sugar acts on the same areas of the brain as alcohol and tobacco to encourage subsequent intake, and it's toxic because research shows that sugar increases disease risk from factors other than added calories, such as when it disrupts metabolism.

This debate is expected to go on. So, what should you do when it comes to sugar in your diet?

There are many reasons why you should try to avoid it and minimize its presence in your overall daily food intake. Here are some solid reasons to start doing so now:

sugar - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark **You'll Eat Less**

Think of sugar as a wave; it rushes into your bloodstream quickly, forcing your body (the pancreas, specifically) to react with a surge of insulin. The result: a short burst of energy while the sugar's in your system, followed by a down phase once it's removed from the bloodstream. In other words, you have lots of energy and then little or no energy in a short period of time. No energy means your body needs to eat again - soon. Limit your sugar intake in favor of nutrient-dense foods and your body provides sustained energy, meaning you eat less often.

You'll Eat Better

Sugar has an addictive quality; eat one cookie and you generally want a second one, and a third. Sure, there's a limit, but by then you're loaded up on sweets and either a) ready for a change of pace, which means packing on more calories; or b) so sick to your stomach that you're in no mood for the meal you were supposed to eat. Skip a meal in lieu of sugary snacks and you'll end up missing out on balanced nutrition. There's a psychological component, too: the more you stray from your diet, the more likely you are to say, "Oh well," and deviate even further.

You'll Save Money

Unless you're eating sugar straight from the bag, you're probably going to spend a substantial amount of money sustaining your sugar habit. Most sugar-laden products (regular or artificially sweetened), of which soft drinks are among the worst offenders, make a big dent in your budget over time. Just think about how much money you'd save over the course of a month if you didn't buy all those sodas, energy drinks, mocha lattes and the like? In short, you'd have plenty of money to splurge on your favorite healthy foods. Now that's a reason to watch out for sugar.

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