

# Well Being

Stillpoint Rehabilitation & Wellness, LLC

## Banish Those Sugar Cravings for a Sweeter Life

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The amount of sugar we take in on a daily basis has been steadily increasing and is being blamed for an increase in diabetes, obesity and many other diseases, as well as more subtle signs of suboptimal health. There are many reasons why many of us crave sugary foods. Sometimes it is cultural. If you grew up in a home where eating dessert was a daily occurrence or were rewarded with sweets, this may be a hard habit to break even when you know better. If you are accustomed to using food as an emotional soother, sweets may feel like a natural remedy when there is a lack of “sweetness” in your life.

One hint that you have a problem with sugar is if you have eaten a wonderful meal, your belly is full, but you still feel it is not complete unless you eat something sweet. Another is if you cannot stop at just one piece of candy or cookie.

Taking in excess sugar can affect your mood, emotions and energy levels in addition to widening your waistline. Those who are sensitive report foggy thinking, anxiety, depression, skin issues, candida infections and many other symptoms. You may not even know why you do not feel well when you are habitually eating sweets.

To decrease the amount of sugar in your diet, read the labels on any packaged foods you consume. Four (4) grams of sugar are equal to one tablespoon of sugar. You will routinely see one granola bar containing 20 grams of sugar. That is 5 tablespoons! Another trick manufacturers use is to make the serving size so small that it misleads you. A bottle of lemonade will say it contains 10 grams of sugar per serving, but the bottle has 2.5 servings. If you drank the whole bottle, you have just consumed 25 grams of sugar—almost 6 tablespoons.

When your blood sugar levels increase dramatically from eating this much sugar, your insulin levels rise and the pathway is triggered to deposit these extra calories as fat on your body. You must avoid this if you want to be healthy.

To keep your blood sugar stable, you must eat regularly—3 meals per day and snacks if needed. Do not skip meals, it just makes you hungrier and more out-of-control later in the day when it is the worst time to consume extra calories.

Choose unprocessed foods. Preparing your food at home is the best way to know exactly what you are eating.

Incorporate healthy fats and lean protein into each and every meal. This will keep your blood sugar levels steady. An example of this is if you make a fruit smoothie, add some coconut oil (healthy fat) or some almond butter (protein plus fat). Do not be afraid of eating healthy fats in moderation because insulin levels do not spike when you eat them. They are also essential for brain power, skin and hair health and for the membranes that surround and protect all of your cells. Olive oil, omega-3 fatty acids (from freshwater fish, walnuts, hemp and chia seeds, coconut oil and ghee are some healthy fats.

Above all, look for ways to fill your life and that of others with healthy sweetness.

**For more info:**

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***The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself.***

Anna Quindlen

# Eat a Good Breakfast Daily for Better Health

Studies have shown that those who eat a healthy breakfast instead of skipping it have better weight management. Some people like to skip meals because it makes them feel like they are cutting calories. This is counter-productive. They end up feeling fuzzy and foggy all day and have low energy levels. By late afternoon they are crashing and tanking up on coffee and low-quality sweets, which makes their blood sugar spike and then plummet. Then they get home and are ravenous so they empty out the fridge, feel tired and sit down to use the computer or watch TV, then crawl to bed. This is not a good plan for long-term health and vitality.

This is a great experiment to try which will tune you into your body's needs. You will need a small notebook or journal.

Day 1 eat anything you have handy for breakfast.

Day 2 eat some eggs with green veggies for breakfast

Day 3 eat whole grain toast with almond butter for breakfast

Day 4 eat some dinner leftovers, like chicken chili, etc. for breakfast

Now, in your journal, note how you feel one hour after each breakfast and how you feel 4 hours later. Your ideal breakfast will boost your energy and keep you feeling satisfied for several hours.

## Medications can be Friends or Foes

Whenever someone new comes to the office, I ask for a list of their medications and supplements. If the person is older or has been treated for a painful condition, it can be a long list. Other times, I am asked if some of their problems are related to medication side effects. It's never easy trying to sort through the drug cocktails that people have been put on over the years. Even when you try to research possible interactions between medications, it does not tell the whole story. This is because studies can tell us that this drug only affects one pathway in the central nervous system, while this other drug works on something in the gastrointestinal area. But there is nothing that can predict how one drug or several will interact with each other and with your specific chemistry or how your liver, kidneys or intestines will deal with the by-products.

Your diet can also affect how drugs are metabolized, as can your age and body fat percentage relative to lean muscle mass.

An example of a life-threatening interaction is the respiratory suppression that can occur when you combine alcohol and oxycodone or other opioids which many in this region are using habitually. Central nervous system suppression can also occur with various combinations of anti-anxiety or sleep medications plus opioids.

Even over-the-counter medicines can cause problems if not used judiciously. Regular intake of acetaminophen (found in Tylenol) and alcohol increases risk of liver damage and using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) and alcohol increases the risk of bleeding from the stomach. Given the sheer number of drugs on the market, and each person's unique constitution, the potential for risky combinations is really endless.

It is important to remember to consistently make healthy choices in what we think, what we eat, how we use our bodies, how much rest we get, and just how we go about our lives in general. This creates a clearer canvas so that if or when you do need to take medication and especially more than one type, it will be easier to determine if you are experiencing side effects. You will immediately notice the change from your usual state of being. Pharmaceuticals can be quite helpful when truly necessary, but we need to have great respect for the physiological effects that these substances can have within our complex bodies. Keep this in mind the next time you consider taking medication for a relatively minor ailment.