SUGAR—THE LEGAL DRUG

GIMME SOME SUGAR!

The average person consumes approximately 22 teaspoons of added sugar on a daily basis. This adds up to an average of 150 pounds of sugar per person per year! The American Heart Association recommends that women limit their sugar intake to no more than 6 teaspoons or 100 calories a day. That's way below what most people are consuming, which is proof of sugar's incredibly addictive nature. Sugar makes us feel better because it stimulates the release of dopamine in the brain. It is a well-documented fact that cravings, withdrawal and relapse symptoms of sugar addicts are similar to those of cocaine and heroin users.

Other effects of sugar consumption: Anxiety, difficulty concentrating, interference with the absorption of calcium and magnesium, constipation, headaches, depression, hormonal imbalance, candida overgrowth, chronic yeast infections, breast and ovarian cancer, wrinkles and grey hair!

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT SUGAR DOES IN YOUR BODY:

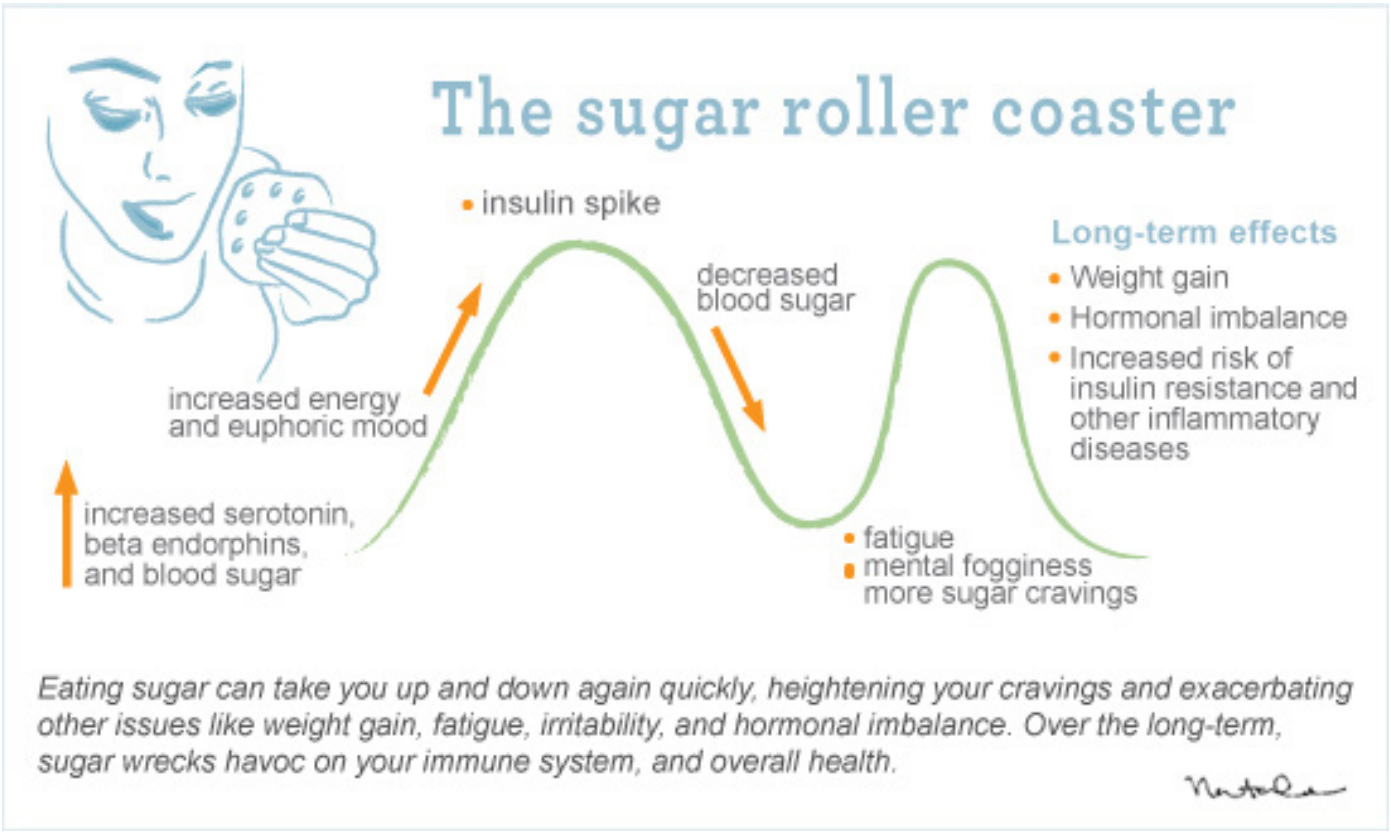
FYI: When we talk about sugar, we're talking about fructose.

Insulin is the hormone that regulates blood sugar (glucose) and it is released from the pancreas in response to sugar in the bloodstream. Its purpose is to grab this sugar from your blood and get it into your cells so that it can be burned for energy. Sugar must be made available in just the right amounts. If you eat too much sugar you flood your system, causing a huge spike in blood sugar levels, which requires the pancreas to make excess insulin to move the sugar to your cells.

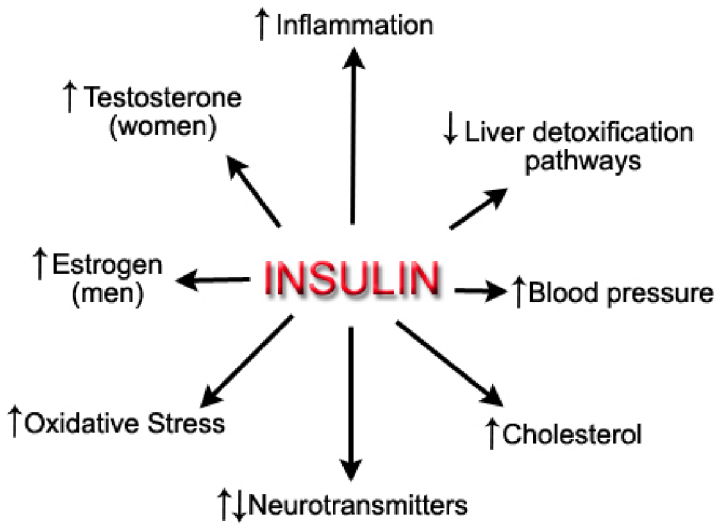
If your cells do not need this sugar right away, insulin carries the excess sugar to the liver where it is stored as glycogen. Just as a car burns gasoline, your body burns this glycogen in your liver for fuel between meals and during exercise. Unfortunately, if you consistently eat too much sugar and carbs, the liver fills up and the excess sugar is converted to fatty acids (triglycerides). These fatty acids enter your bloodstream and get stored in your tissues.

When you eat healthy complex carbohydrates, they break down gradually keeping your insulin and sugar levels balanced with only slight increases after meals. But when you eat unhealthy, refined or simple carbohydrates (think cake and cookies, white bread, white rice) these break down much more quickly causing a dramatic spike in your blood sugar and insulin levels.

Remember, the purpose of insulin is to escort sugar from your blood to your cells. So this huge spike that occurs when you eat refined sugar causes it to get moved out of the blood a lot faster than normal because the pancreas is making tons of insulin to clean up the mess! This in turn causes a similar dramatic drop in your blood sugar levels, also known as a temporary hypoglycemia. This drop in blood sugar levels leaves you irritable and anxious and leads you to crave more carbohydrates (usually in the form of refined sugars) to bring your blood sugar levels back up to normal. And around and around you go.



Eventually, if you continue with this vicious cycle, your body will begin to build up an insulin resistance. What this basically means is that the insulin in your system no longer does what it used to do, which is taking sugar out of the bloodstream to your cells. But your body doesn't know this so the pancreas continues to release more insulin into your blood to bring down sugar levels after meals. If the insulin no longer works properly then this eventually leads to high levels of both sugar and insulin in your blood. Meanwhile the cells in your body and your brain are starved for glucose to make energy and you feel tired, hungry, foggy, depressed and you crave more sugar ALL THE TIME!

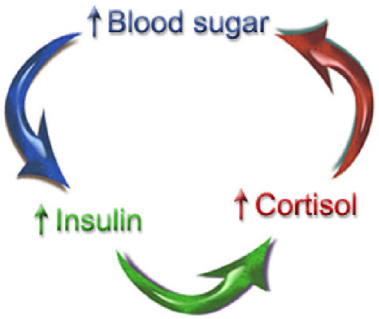


NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE SUGAR/HORMONE CONNECTION IN WOMEN:

1. It starts with a consistent excess of insulin in your body. Remember insulin is a hormone and if it is out of whack, other hormones will be out of whack too.

2. When insulin levels go up, so do cortisol levels. Cortisol is the stress hormone and it competes with progesterone for the same receptors. Unfortunately cortisol always wins this fight.

3. Here's the big one: Excess insulin causes the ovaries to produce more testosterone and less estradiol.



4. This excess testosterone can cause your ovaries to malfunction, which can lead to sporadic ovulation or lack of ovulation.

5. Also, high insulin raises estrogen production, and this excess estrogen can suppress follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) production.

6. When FSH is suppressed, this causes luteinizing hormone (LH), to dominate over FSH. Remember FSH is responsible for maturing your follicles.

7. When LH dominates over FSH, ovulation generally begins to sputter and may stop occurring completely. This is because FSH isn't able to complete it's job.

8. This leads to lower progesterone. Without enough progesterone, the body can't fully support normal ovulation cycles or pregnancy.

9. This can cause irregular periods or stop menstruation altogether. It can also lead to all the other conditions of low progesterone – PMS, PCOS, Endometriosis, Fibroids and so on.

Just about every cell in your body is affected by too much insulin, which also results in the production of excess inflammatory chemicals - the basis for all chronic disease! This link between too much insulin and cellular inflammation is why hormonal imbalances often improve when you eat to stabilize your blood sugar.

Food for Thought

When you eat a high-carbohydrate food prior to bedtime you cause blood sugar and insulin levels to soar. Elevated insulin during sleep not only blocks HGH (human growth hormone) release, inhibiting proper repair and recovery of your tissues, but you will find that you wake up either groggy and in need of more sleep and/or very hungry from experiencing low blood sugar.

Insulin resistance also affects your ability to use stored fat as energy. **You CANNOT effectively burn stored fat with elevated levels of insulin in your blood. Even if you exercise like a wild woman!**

A Word about Alcohol

Unfortunately alcohol can really muck with your hormones. Alcohol has a very high sugar content, especially sugary mixed drinks, cocktails, and beer, and should be consumed in limited quantities, especially if you are trying to get pregnant or have insulin resistance issues. Alcohol causes a major insulin spike and crash and according to studies can actually increase estrogen production and reduce progesterone production. If you drink at night it can really mess with your ability to sleep. In addition to that, alcohol can increase the conversion of testosterone into estrogen, which can increase chances of estrogen dominance.

Women often ask whether there is a somewhat healthy source of alcohol or ask how much they can drink without consequences. Most people don't like my answer but as a health coach and your guide in this program, I feel it is my sacred duty to hold you accountable while you work through your health challenges. The truth is, there isn't a miracle alcoholic beverage that won't have an impact on your health in some way or another.

At the same time, I realize that for many people, myself included, cutting out alcohol completely is unrealistic.

So here's my take on it:
The worst types of drinks are the sugary cocktails and mixed drinks for obvious reasons and beer because of the gluten and carbohydrate content. Your best bet would be organic red wine, which is far superior to conventional red wine because grapes are one of the most heavily sprayed fruits. And it contains resveratrol which is a powerful antioxidant. I think sticking to three drinks or less per week is your best bet. Oh and a lot of people I know swear by tequila too, but I don't drink it after a particularly bad experience in college so I can't really vouch for it.

I would also suggest kombucha as well. It's got less than 1% alcohol in it but it's bubbly and tastes good! Also, you might want to try taking 2-3 activated charcoal capsules before you drink. It's used in hospitals for alcohol poisoning and it works by absorbing and filtering toxins from the stomach. It's not a miracle fix but it definitely helps your body process the alcohol better.

You should also eat a meal or a high protein snack before drinking so it doesn't have such a profound effect on your blood sugar.

And here's some advice from Dave Asprey: After you drink, go ahead and take 500 mg of vitamin C and 600 mg of Nac-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC) to help lower liver aldehyde, which is a toxin that your liver creates from alcohol.

Sneaky Little Sugar

Are brown sugar or evaporated cane juice better than plain old white sugar. Um, the answer is an unequivocal no. Product manufacturers are constantly trying to trick you and you should not be fooled. Pretty much all sugars have the same effect on your body.