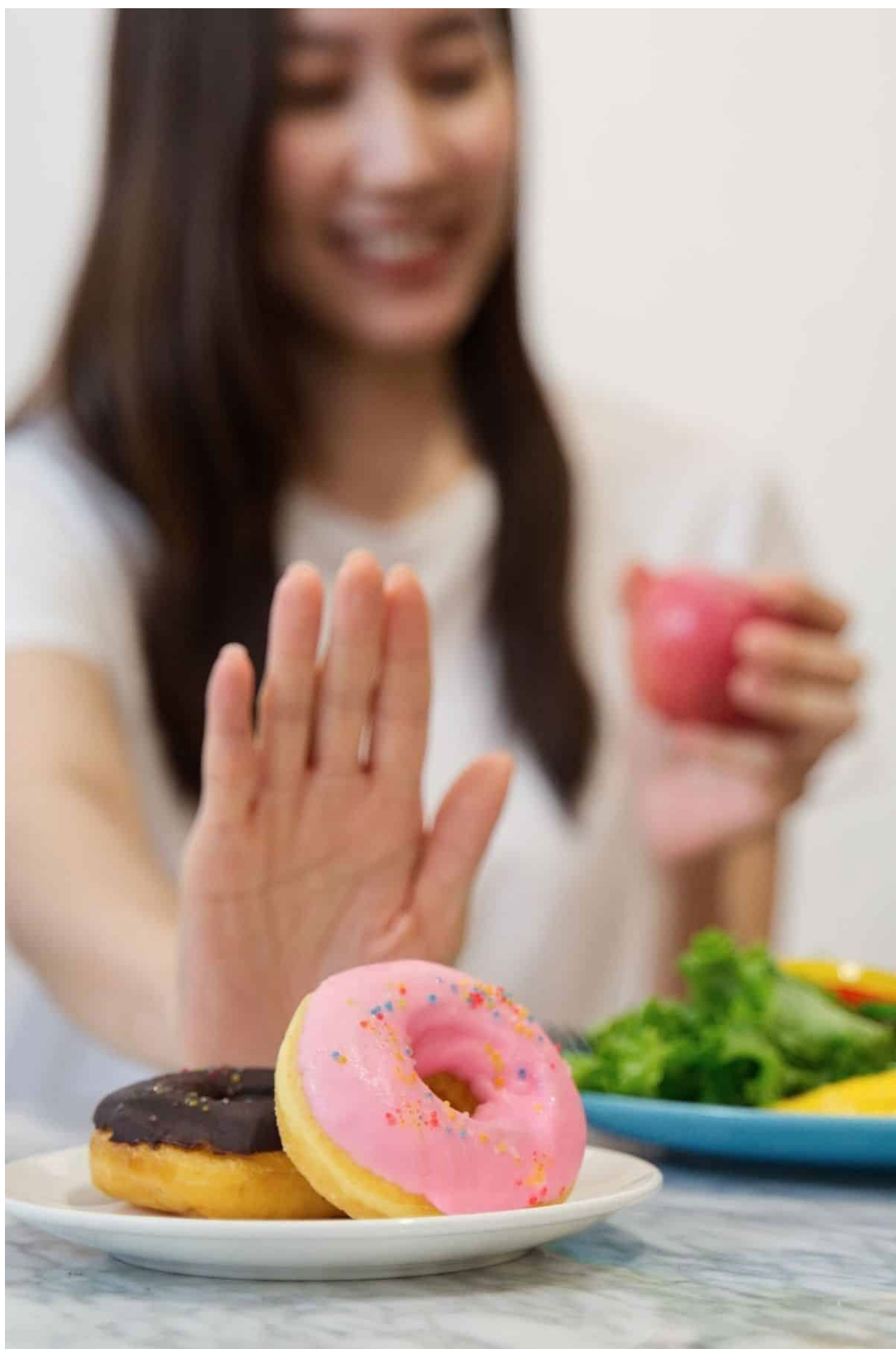


A Comprehensive Guide to Going Sugar-Free

By Carrie Forrest, MPH



Part 1

8 Tips to Go Sugar-Free (Without Going Crazy)

Cutting sugar out of your diet is one strategy to lose weight and feel healthier, but it can be a tough transition. Here are eight tips to go sugar-free without going crazy, plus ideas on what to eat on a low-sugar diet.

Sugar is highly addictive and can control you. Some studies have shown sugar to be [more addictive](#) than cocaine and nicotine. Prolonged intake of sugar has been linked to mood disorders, obesity, diabetes, and other [serious metabolic disorders](#). It may seem like a struggle to go sugar-free at first (and it can be!), but it will get easier. Experiment with the tips included in this article and you're much more likely to beat the sugar blues without going crazy.

Who should go Sugar Free?

Ideally, most people would be on a low-sugar or sugar-free diet. But, a sugar-free diet or one low in added sugars can be especially helpful for those having difficulties with blood sugar stabilization or systemic inflammation. This can include those with pre-diabetes, diabetes, [PCOS](#) or other hormonal imbalances, or an autoimmune disease.

A no-sugar diet is more restrictive and can refer to a diet where you avoid even natural foods that have higher amounts of sugar. People who have diabetes or pre-diabetes should probably be on a sugar-free diet, choosing real foods that have a low glycemic index. Learn [how to do a sugar detox](#).

Keep in mind that even vegetables can contain sugar in small amounts, so a no-sugar diet may be unnecessarily restrictive for the majority of people. If you don't have diabetes or pre-diabetes but still want to manage your blood sugar and inflammation, try cutting back on added sugars and see if you get an improvement in symptoms.

What is a Low-Sugar Diet?

A low-sugar diet is a diet plan that focuses on maintaining low overall sugar intake. There isn't one strict definition of this diet, but it usually means ***choosing real food and avoiding packaged or prepared foods that have added sugars***.

Processed foods such as common snack items, fast food, and most restaurant meals contain added sugar for both flavor and appetite stimulation. Added sugars are not only limited to obvious items like cookies or candy. Even processed foods like store-bought marinara, cured meats, or frozen meals often contain high amounts of sugar.

A low-sugar diet plan eliminates processed foods as much as possible or suggests processed foods without added sugars. One person may choose to eliminate processed foods on a low-sugar diet but continue to include real food sources of sugar. Another person may choose to eliminate processed foods and high-glycemic foods such as natural sweeteners, fruit, and high-carbohydrate foods.

There are many ways to tailor this diet to your needs but generally speaking, **a low-sugar or sugar-free diet is any diet that limits sugar with the intention of avoiding blood sugar instability and overall inflammation.**



Tips to Go Sugar Free

If you're ready to cut out sugar completely from your diet, these eight tips should help make the transition easier. As always, please consult your healthcare provider before making any changes to your diet, exercise, or supplement routine.

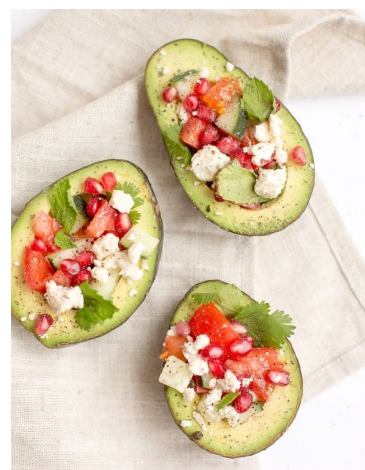
1. Increase Healthy Fat Intake to Improve Satiation

One gram of fat contains 9 calories while one gram of sugar contains 4 calories. Fat is more satiating, making you feel more full for a longer period of time. If you eat more fat, you'll generally crave less sweet stuff and have fewer symptoms of [sugar withdrawal](#).

Opt for healthy fats like:

- avocados,
- nuts and seeds,
- coconut oil,
- extra virgin olive oil,
- fattier fish like salmon, mackerel and sardines.

Adding more healthy fat sources to your meals should decrease after-meal or snack time cravings for sugary treats.



2. Get More Sleep to Balance Hunger Hormones

Studies have shown that shorter sleep duration is associated with an elevated body mass index. The reason for this is because your appetite regulating hormones ([leptin and ghrelin](#)) are negatively impacted by sleep debt, causing you to crave easy sources of energy that often come from sweets.

If you make sleep a priority and aim to get at least 7-9 hours per night your hunger hormones balance out and your cravings for the sweet stuff are reduced. Getting consistent solid sleep is one of my biggest challenges, but it's gotten so much better using my [healthy sleep hacks](#).

3. Practice Stress Management Techniques to Control Emotional Eating

Emotional eating is common among those who are stressed out, but there are ways to control it. Adopt a meditation practice, go for a walk outside, sip some calming tea, meet up with a friend for [yoga](#), or try some breathing exercises. [The 4-7-8 breathing exercise](#) has been known to work well in times of stress.

Finding something to take your mind off your cravings is necessary when you've been involved in a stressful event and are prone to emotional eating.

If you think you have a true sugar addiction, then you might need professional help. See this post about how to [beat sugar addiction](#).



4. Use Fruit to Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth

Low glycemic fruits such as berries, green apples, and fruits from the citrus family are good natural options to help you satisfy a sweet craving. These fruits provide a hint of sweetness while also providing you with a fair amount of fiber and beneficial phytonutrients.

The fiber fills you up and the phytonutrients provide your body with vitamins and minerals that help you meet nutrient requirements so you don't try to seek them out somewhere else. So, unless your doctor has advised you to avoid fruit due to blood sugar issues, then you can use fruit to help satisfy your sweet cravings. Fruit is nature's dessert.

5. Drink More Water

Often times you may think you're hungry when in fact your body is in need of some hydration. Drinking one to two glasses of water when you get a sugar craving can help quell that craving. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day also helps keep cravings at bay and help with any symptoms of [sugar withdrawal](#).

If you aren't a fan of plain water, try adding slices of fruits, cucumbers or mint to your water to make it more pleasing to your palate. Here's a super easy recipe for [Cucumber Lemon Infused Water](#). You can also try sparkling mineral water or naturally flavored carbonated waters to add some interest.





6. Boost Your Feel Good Hormones

Serotonin is also known as the happiness hormone. Serotonin levels can be raised through exercise, a nutritious diet and plenty of restorative sleep. People with [higher serotonin levels](#) are less likely to crave sweets.

7. Consider Sugar-Free Alternatives

There are plenty of [sugar substitutes](#) available on the market, but not all of them are considered healthy. And, you may need to be cautious about using sugar-free alternatives when you're trying to cut back on sugar. The jury is still out as to whether or not it's a good idea to use sugar alternatives as opposed to simply cutting back on sugar or going 100% sugar-free.

Aspartame is the sugar substitute generally found in diet drinks. It also goes by the name of NutraSweet and is made in a lab from aspartic acid and phenylalanine dipeptides. There have been concerns about aspartame as a potential carcinogen. Though its carcinogenic effects have not yet been proven, it's still recommended that you avoid it.

Another sugar-free alternative to stay away from is sucralose, also known as Splenda. [A 2017 study](#) found that zero-calorie sweeteners such as aspartame and sucralose were actually found to increase, not decrease, weight.

Stevia and monk fruit extract may be better sugar alternative choices. Neither stevia nor monk fruit have been shown to be unsafe or have negative side effects, so right now they're probably the safest options. See my list of acceptable [sugar substitutes](#).



8. Know Your Limits

Some people report that even just a tiny hint of something sweet provokes intense cravings. For these people, it is recommended that they quit all sweet stuff temporarily. This includes fruit and safe zero-calorie sugar alternatives.

If you fall into this category, as many people with insulin resistance often do, you can add back in sweet alternatives once your taste buds have been reset. This can be anywhere from two weeks to a full year. You'll just have to know what works for you through intuition and trial and error.

FAQs

How do I know if sugar is in my food?

This can be tricky! Ideally, you are eating mostly real food which wouldn't have a label. Foods that come in a package often have hidden added sugars. So, some of the ingredients on the package might not sound like sugar, but they are. Here's an infographic about hidden sugars.

Do I have to avoid fruit when going sugar-free?

You don't have to give up fruit unless you have some health reason for avoiding it. As mentioned above, fruit is nature's candy and contains health-promoting micronutrients and fiber.

What if I cheat?

It's not a contest and please don't feel guilty if you have sugar when you don't intend to. In this case, it might be good to review your reasons for going sugar-free and think about what other choices you could make in the future, especially in a similar situation.

What can you eat on a sugar free diet?

Just eat real foods! Seriously, you can eat so many foods on a sugar free diet, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, animal protein, eggs, dairy, nuts, seeds, avocados.

What foods are naturally low in sugar?

There's a lot of low sugar foods! In general, low sugar foods are those high in protein, fat, or fiber and low in natural or added sugars.

Animal proteins including beef, poultry, and seafood are high in protein and contain no carbohydrates or sugar. Foods like spinach, arugula, squashes, cruciferous veggies, and other non-starchy vegetables are low in carbohydrates and sugar and high in fiber.

Fruits like berries and starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes and plantains are higher in sugar and carbohydrates, but are still welcome on a low sugar diet in moderation. Higher-glycemic fruits such as apples, grapes, bananas, and melons can also be included on a low-sugar diet in moderation.

What are added sugars?

Added sugars are any sugars that are not naturally occurring in the food you're consuming. Added sugars are a possibility with processed foods or baked goods and can include sugars such as white/brown sugar, corn syrup, and dextrose or natural sugars like coconut sugar, maple syrup, and honey.

Added sugars are most commonly found in sweet snacks, sodas, and candy, but can also be found in sauces, granola bars, non-dairy milk products, yogurt, frozen meals, and countless other processed foods.

Can I eat carbs?

A low sugar diet is not necessarily a low carbohydrate diet. You can still eat a sufficient amount of carbohydrates by consuming vegetables, low glycemic fruits, and whole grains.

However, if you're following a low sugar diet to manage blood sugar and disorders like diabetes, you may want to consider the glycemic index of the carbohydrate sources you choose.

How do you cut sugar out of your diet?

It's up to you whether to cut it out 100% or to take baby steps. Either way, you'll likely see health benefits from cutting back on sugary foods.

How can I live sugar free?

Unless you have a health condition that means you really need to restrict even sugar from whole foods, then there are lots of ways to live sugar-free and still not feel deprived.

From eating fruit to just adding more whole foods to your diet, it's actually not that hard to live sugar-free. However, if you're feeling panicked about cutting sugar out of your diet, you might need to consult a therapist who can help you separate emotionally from sugar.

What can you eat on a sugar detox?

If you're detoxing from sugar, then it's probably best to avoid fruit just to help your tastebuds reset. So, focus on staying hydrated and eating lots of real, nourishing foods while your body adjusts. Read more about doing a [sugar detox](#).

My Experience

Going sugar-free wasn't an option for me most of my life. I used candy and other sweets as my comfort and way of staying sane, so cutting it out would have just added more stress to my life.

In fact, it wasn't until I got serious about managing my stress and learning how to get in touch with my feelings that I was able to stop using sugar as my coping mechanism. Once this happened, I felt so much more freedom. I can't even tell you how freeing it is to eat dessert but because I want to, not because I *have* to.

I know not everyone eats sweets for emotional reasons, some people eat a lot of sugar simply because it tastes so good. Our brains and bodies have evolved for us to seek out pleasurable foods. But, the truth remains that many of us go overboard with sugars,

especially refined sugars. That's what it's not a bad idea to think about going sugar-free or simply cutting back on sugars from your diet.

Conclusions

Most people would benefit from cutting back on sugar in their diets. Most nutrition experts agree that the best diet for most people is one that is balanced in macronutrients, and may include natural sweeteners on occasion. For more support on going sugar-free, you are invited to join my [Sugar Free Challenge group](#) on Facebook.

Part 2

10 Tips for Doing a Sugar Detox

This article shares ten tips for how to do a sugar detox and live sugar-free. Kick the sugar habit to improve your health and mindset.

The most important reason you need a sugar detox is because [sugar is an addictive substance](#). A detox from sweets can potentially help you rewire your brain and [break an addiction](#).

You don't have to be a sugar addict to want a break from sugar. If you think you're eating too much refined sugars and want a break, doing a sugar detox can help.



Getting Ready

It's best to make a plan for [going sugar free](#). If you have a plan in place, you won't feel as overwhelmed or confused – especially once any sugar detox symptoms start!

First, set a timeframe for when you want to quit refined sugars and for how long you want to abstain. Plan for 7-10 days when you are going to go cold turkey and eliminate any added, refined, artificial, or natural sugars.

An alternative is to take incremental steps over a longer period, say 30 days, to reduce sugar from your diet.

The next step is to make behavioral changes to keep you from turning to sweets. You'll see several nutrition and lifestyle tips below that can help break your cravings.

Sugar Detox Tips

Once you've made the commitment to go sugar-free, there are some tips to help make your sugar detox easier and more bearable.

And, of course, please do consult your healthcare provider before starting any diet or lifestyle change to make sure it's appropriate for you.

1. Quit Soda & Drink More Water

One of the best ways to kickstart your sugar detox is to quit your soda habit. Replace regular soda and diet soda with sparkling water, unsweetened herbal tea, and plain water.

Regular soda has anywhere from [20-48 grams of sugar](#) per eight-ounce serving (and most cans are more than eight ounces). Diet sodas aren't necessarily a great alternative to regular sodas, though, since scientists think there are some [health risks with diet sodas](#) too.



Instead of consuming soda or any type of sugar-sweetened beverage, it's probably best to switch to hydrating beverages like water. Water is essential for so many reasons, but it is also very much tied to our detoxification system.

You can make water more interesting by adding lemon slices, cucumber slices, or try sparkling mineral water. Check out this super easy [Cucumber & Lemon Infused Water recipe](#).

2. Increase Healthy Fat Intake



Another great step to take in your sugar detox is to increase your intake of healthy fats. This change can help [reduce your cravings](#) for sugary foods. See my full list of ways to [reduce sugar cravings](#).

Healthy fats include avocado, unsweetened coconut products, grass-fed butter or ghee (unless you have a dairy allergy), and nuts and seeds. Aim for 1-2 tablespoons of healthy fat with each meal.

3. Consider Glutamine

The third tip to help with your sugar detox is to consider taking a [glutamine supplement](#), especially in the late afternoon when sugar cravings might hit. [Glutamine](#) is an amino acid found in protein.

Due to our food supply and the standard American diet, many of us are low in neurotransmitters and nutrients such as glutamine. Supplementing with glutamine can help [combat hypoglycemia](#) and regulate blood sugars.

Glutamine is an energy source for intestinal and immune cells. It also helps maintain the barrier between the intestines and the rest of your body and aids with proper growth of intestinal cells.



4. Choose Fresh Fruit

Replace desserts with fresh fruits to help support your detox from sweets. If your default habit is to reach for sweets after your meal, try weaning yourself off of desserts by replacing them with fresh fruit.

Fruit has natural sugars, but it also contains nutrients and fiber to help slow the absorption into your bloodstream. Fruit can be a [healthy alternative](#) to dessert, especially antioxidant-rich, low-sugar fruit like berries.

If you're truly detoxing from sugar and want to avoid even natural sugars during your detox, then you might want to avoid fruit for a limited time. Most people should consume at least 1-2 servings of fresh fruit a day as part of a balanced diet.



5. Eat More Protein

Make sure you're eating enough protein at breakfast. Eating enough protein with your morning meal has been shown to help with [weight loss and satiety](#).

What you [eat at breakfast](#) also influences what you eat for the rest of the day. If you break your overnight fast with sugar and carbohydrates instead of protein or fat, you will set yourself up for a blood sugar roller coaster and cravings for the rest of the day blood sugar roller coaster and cravings for the rest of the day.

6. Eat More Complex Carbs

There's no need to completely lower or cut out carbohydrates even if you're watching sweets. It is the refined, simple carbohydrates like pasta, bread, and sugar can spike and crash your blood sugar.

On the other hand, starchy vegetables like sweet potato and winter squashes provide you with a nutrient-dense source of carbohydrates. Sprinkling a baked sweet potato with cinnamon tastes like a treat, but provides you with stable blood sugar from the complex carbs and the cinnamon. So, choose complex carbs like sweet potato and butternut squash when you're detoxing from sugar. Don't forget to eat your veggies, too.



7. Choose Healthy Snacks

Have an abundance of healthy snacks ready during your sugar detox. If you stay prepared with healthy, low-sugar snacks, you won't need to reach for the packaged goods and sugary treats. Having healthy snacks on hand also helps you if you notice cravings creeping up during your detox.

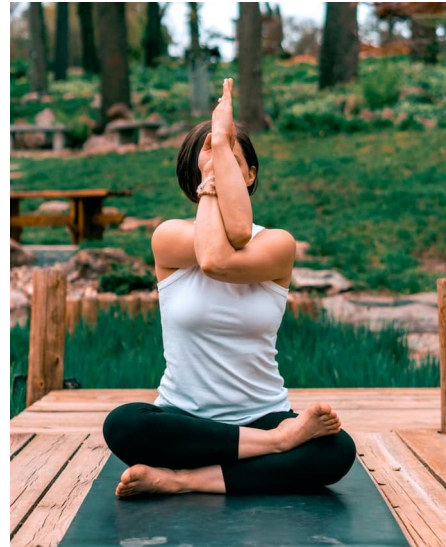
Healthy snacks include:

- celery sticks with nut or seed butter,
- hard-boiled eggs or deviled eggs,
- greek yogurt or coconut yogurt with blueberries,
- almond flour crackers with almond butter,
- sugar-free turkey or beef jerky,
- smoked salmon on a gluten-free cracker with regular or dairy-free cream cheese,
- olives,
- smoothies made with protein powder.

8. Manage Stress

Stress can cause you to [crave hyperpalatable foods](#) such as sugary snacks. Stress also depletes your body of important nutrients like magnesium and B-vitamins, which can drive cravings.

It's important to get support to help manage stress during your detox. Make an appointment with a health coach or a functional health practitioner to make sure you get the support you need. Or, grab a buddy who can do the detox with you. You can also join my [Sugar Free Challenge](#) that I host every month. It's free to join and you will find tons of support and resources there. Another way to manage stress during a diet change is to do light exercise. Aim for natural, daily movement like walks outside or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. If it's appropriate for you, a few sessions in the gym a week can help you eliminate toxins via sweating (a sauna is great for this, as well).

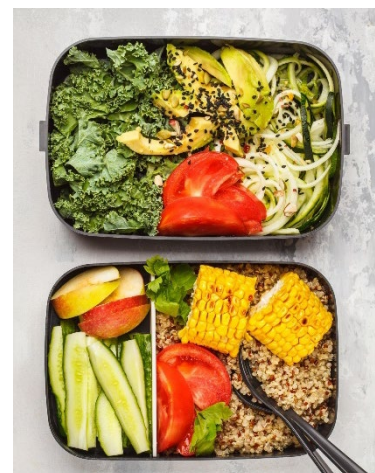


9. Get Enough Sleep

Sleep deprivation can lead to cravings for [calorically dense foods](#), which most often include those high in sugar. A single night of poor or insufficient sleep can [reduce insulin sensitivity](#) the next day. This can make your blood sugar less stable and you more prone to crave sweets and carbohydrates to keep your blood sugar up.

10. Don't Skip Meals

If you're trying to get off sugar, this is not the best time to introduce intermittent fasting. Your body will be going through a slight period of stress as you retrain it to stop craving sugar, and [intermittent fasting](#) can also be a stressor on the body. In addition, unless you're fasting purposefully and safely, skipping meals will drop your blood sugar and make you crave sweets and carbohydrates to bring it up again. Ideally, you would do some meal prepping during your sugar detox to help keep your meals consistent and balanced.



FAQs

What can you eat on a sugar-free diet?

When you're cutting out sweets, you shouldn't feel restricted with your overall diet. Stick to a whole foods, clean eating diet high in satiating fat and protein and incorporate detoxifying foods. Focus on high quality meats, anti-inflammatory fats like avocado and coconut oil, and plenty of veggies. See my article all about [how to eat clean](#).

Aim to fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables such as leafy greens. Vegetables and leafy greens are amazing for detoxification and provide your body with essential vitamins and minerals that were depleted by sugar consumption. Roasting vegetables in coconut oil and cinnamon naturally brings out a sweeter taste and stabilizes blood sugar.

Can you still eat carbohydrates?

Yes! But be mindful of your intake and the source. Avoid simple and processed carbs like bread, pasta, sweet treats, and processed snacks. Instead, eat a moderate serving of starchy vegetables, legumes, or whole grains and pair with fat and protein to keep blood sugar levels stable.

Will I experience detox symptoms?

As your body releases toxins when you go sugar-free, it can make you feel worse before you feel better. Remember that you could be breaking an addiction, and may experience [withdrawal symptoms](#). Possible symptoms include headache and intense cravings. If symptoms become serious, consult your healthcare provider immediately.

If you support your body during this period, you can get through it more smoothly. Incorporate gentle detoxing routines like sweating it out in a sauna, drinking plenty of water, and daily movement. Combine detox and self-care by taking an Epsom salt bath, dry brushing, and doing a clay face mask.

Can I eat sugar after a detox?

Yes, but it's wise to stick with unrefined sugars or natural sugars from whole foods like fruit. If you go back to eating refined sugars, then the dependency cycle and cravings may start all over again.

Will I lose weight on a detox?

Maybe, but that is not the primary goal. The goal of a sugar detox is to reduce your cravings for sugar and to move forward with less dependence on refined sugars.

Conclusions

While a sugar detox sounds extreme, it can be a great way to cut out your intake of refined sugars and move toward a cleaner diet. It's important that you do what works best for your lifestyle and body, but cutting back on sugar will likely benefit your health. Read more about [how to go sugar free](#).

Part 3

How to Beat Sugar Addiction & Cravings: 10 Tips

Cravings for sugar can throw off your plan to eat healthier or lose weight. This article includes ten ways to beat the dependency and addiction on added sugars and how to get rid of the cravings for good.



Sugar plays a huge role in our lives. Added sugars are present in most processed foods and restaurant meals, even ones that don't seem sweet. If you're eating a lot of packaged foods and not reading labels, you're probably over-consuming sugar.

Even if you're eating a healthy diet, you can still may have an issue with sugar dependency and cravings.

The problem is that it can very extremely hard to avoid the cravings for sugar, especially if you've been eating a lot of it. This article shares some of the long-term strategies from breaking the sugar dependency cycle and getting rid of the cravings.



Sugar Addiction or Dependency

There is no doubt that for the majority of people, sugar can cause addiction-like symptoms. Obsessing over sugar, being unable to moderate your intake, and experiencing withdrawal symptoms without it are all good markers that you have an addictive pattern with sugar consumption.

Sugar consumption, like that of all hyperpalatable foods, triggers our brain's reward system. A release of dopamine and a rise in serotonin associates these foods with pleasure, and rewires our brain to crave more of them to continue releasing dopamine.

Quitting sugar is sometimes more than breaking a habit or a matter of willpower – it is breaking an addiction.

Sugar addiction is more comparable to that of nicotine or caffeine addiction than that of a drug addiction. Others think that sugar addiction is a psychological addiction rather than a physical addiction. However, that doesn't decrease the significance of the addiction or dependency.

Please note, that with any sort of addiction or dependency, it's important that you work with a professional healthcare or mental health provider. The information in this article gives an overview of how to break a sugar addiction, but it's always best to consult with your provider to develop a plan for your individual situation.

Symptoms

If you're still unsure if you're addicted to sugar, consider the possible symptoms below:

Intense sugar cravings. If you need something sweet to finish off your meal or experience a need for sugary snacks in the afternoon or at night, you might be fighting a sugar addiction. Thinking about sugary treats between meals and obsessively searching for new dessert recipes can be a sign of sugar addiction.

Carbohydrate cravings and loss of moderation control. A sugar addiction can also manifest as intense carb cravings, such as wanting a giant bowl of pasta. Carbohydrates convert to glucose (sugar) in our bodies and have a similar reward effect in our brains.

Withdrawal symptoms. If you experience irritability, headaches, a racing heart, stomach issues, muscle tremors, or sweating in the absence of sugar, those are signs of sugar withdrawal.

Ten Tips to Break a Sugar Addiction

Just to reiterate, addiction is a serious issue that should be treated with care and under the guidance of a licensed healthcare professional. But, these ten tips should help get you started on the right path for addressing your sugar addiction, stopping the cravings, and, ultimately, finding freedom.



1. Consider a therapist to help break the addictive cycle

Having support is an important part of breaking a dependency on anything, including sugar. A therapist or a dietitian can provide strategies to manage stress and make breaking your addiction a success.

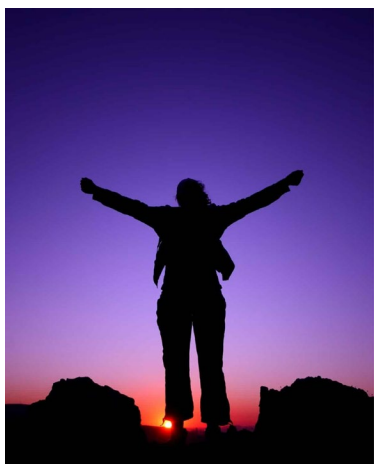
It's also important to make sure that you don't just go from one addiction to another. Working with a professional therapist is really important to help stay addiction-free.

2. Consider a sugar detox

A sugar detox can mean anything from cutting it out completely to phasing it out slowly. Another type of sugar detox might mean avoiding added sugars, but still allowing for natural sugars from fruits.

The bottom line is that you should make a plan for what kind of sugar detox is best for your lifestyle and health needs. Learn more about [how to do a sugar detox](#).





3. Address past or current stressors that might be causing dependency

At least one study showed that sugar dependency and cravings are [not necessarily about the sugar](#) itself, but may be caused by environmental stressors and situations.

One way to manage sugar cravings is to make it a point to be present with yourself and tune into your patterns. Do you always reach for sugar after a stressful day? Do you experience a craving after you encounter a trigger for a past trauma? Awareness of when and why cravings occur is the first step in freeing yourself from them.

4. Consider complete avoidance

Depending on your personality type, completely cutting sugar and sweet foods can help break your addiction. Remove any sugar and sweet foods from your home—make it a family effort, if necessary. Cutting out or reducing sugar will probably benefit everyone in the house.



If you are going 100% sugar-free, then you'll probably need to avoid sugary foods, limit natural sugars including high-sugar fruits and sweeteners, and maybe even avoid sweeteners. Learn more about what you can eat on a [no sugar diet](#).



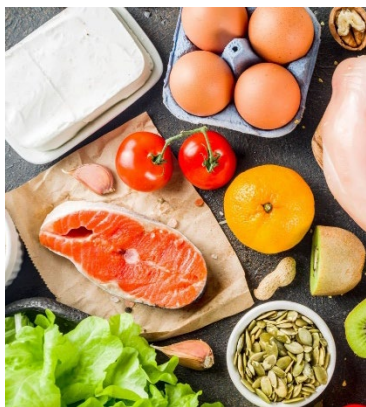
5. Be gentle with yourself

Remember that you are breaking an addiction that is probably not even your choice—the majority of Americans are raised on sugar. You're undoing years of programming. Be proud that you are undergoing this and improving your health. Celebrate the wins and support yourself during missteps.

6. Replace the habit

If you are getting rid of added sugars in your diet, then you don't want to trade one addiction for another. Instead, be mindful of the difference between a [habit and an addiction](#). If it serves you, consider replacing dessert with an after-meal walk or a cup of herbal tea.





7. Ensure micronutrient sufficiency

If you're deficient in micronutrients like vitamins and minerals, that [can lead to sugar cravings](#). By working with a functional health practitioner who is skilled in nutrition, you can determine what nutritional deficiencies you have through lab testing, and then change your diet accordingly.

Supplementation can also help to ensure micronutrient sufficiency. See my recommendations for the best supplements for [women over 30](#) and [women over 50](#).

8. Eat enough protein and healthy fats

Fat and protein satiate our bodies and [keep blood sugar levels stable](#). Experts suggest eating a breakfast high in protein, and choosing snacks that have a nice balance of protein and healthy fats. A balanced diet should lead to a decrease in sugar cravings.



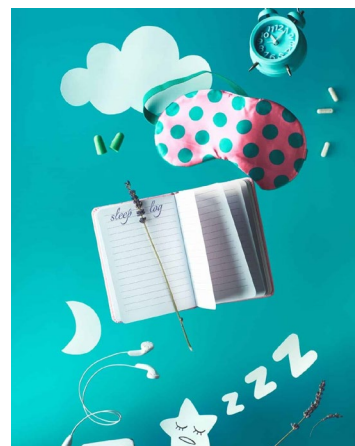
9. Conversely, eat enough carbs and enough in general

Under-eating carbohydrates for too long can also cause your body to crave starch and sugar to produce glucose. Choose complex carbs like sweet potatoes, brown rice, and lots of vegetables.

10. Get enough sleep

Believe it or not, but [not getting enough sleep](#) can cause junk food cravings. Sleep deficiency can reduce insulin sensitivity and increase stress hormones, which both contribute to imbalanced blood sugar and subsequent sugar cravings.

Aim for 8-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep a night. If you are having trouble getting quality sleep, check out my [helpful sleep hacks](#).



FAQs

How do you break a sugar addiction?

The most important things when breaking a sugar addiction include having a game plan and having a support system. This is an excellent time to examine your thoughts and patterns and how they contribute to your habits and any other addictions.

And, of course, it's important to work with your healthcare provider to determine a recovery plan that meets your individual needs.

Can nutrition deficiencies cause sugar cravings?

It is possible that sugar cravings may be related to a nutritional deficiency. Under-eating any macronutrient can lead to sugar cravings. The same goes for micronutrients. In this case, it's best to work with your healthcare provider to determine what specific deficiencies you might have.

For more support on going sugar-free, you are invited to join my [Sugar Free Challenge group](#) on Facebook.

My Experience

I have a lot of empathy for anyone dealing with addiction, as I have experienced sugar addiction in the past. My addiction was in conjunction with an eating disorder, and it took a lot of work to repair my relationship with food and with sugar. Read more about my [clean eating before and after story](#).

Conclusions

If you have strong sugar cravings on a daily basis, then you might have a dependency or addiction to added sugars. From doing a sugar detox to other lifestyle and nutrition tips, this article includes some practical long-term strategies for breaking the cycle.

Note: this article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Please consult your healthcare provider for recommendations related to your individual situation.

The Author



Carrie Forrest, MBA, MPH is the creator of the popular food blog, [Clean Eating Kitchen](#). Her website reaches hundreds of thousands of people a month and is focused on sharing healthy gluten-free and dairy-free recipes, along with well-researched holistic health information.

She holds master's degrees in public health (nutrition) from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and in business administration from the University of Southern California, and has a professional background in non-profit hospital development. Carrie's main passion is nutrition and wellness. She uses a real food diet, balanced lifestyle, and LDN to help manage her autoimmune disease, PCOS, and migraines. Carrie is also a survivor of thyroid cancer since 2012. Many of Carrie's followers are women who are also recovering from chronic illness. Carrie lives with her husband and two rescue cats on

California's beautiful Central Coast. She is an accomplished pianist and an aspiring violinist, but also enjoys spending her spare time hiking and visiting local farmers' markets.