

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute



Boost your health by quitting sugar

It's no secret that eating sugar can add up to weight gain, but you might be surprised by how quickly it can happen. Adding one sugar-sweetened soft drink to your day – without cutting back on calories elsewhere – can lead to a 15-pound weight gain over three years.¹ But that's not all. Sugar can drag on your health in other ways that you might not expect.

When you put the brakes on sugar, you may start enjoying these health benefits.²

Help your heart: Excess sugar can be a danger for your heart over time. Your body releases extra insulin into the bloodstream to deal with sugar. This can put stress on your heart and lead to heart attacks and strokes. The good news: Eating less sugar can help lower blood pressure and reduce your risk for heart disease.

Lower type 2 diabetes risk: Your pancreas, liver and kidneys work hard to keep your blood sugar levels in balance when you eat. By limiting the sugar in your diet, you're better able to control your blood sugar levels and prevent or manage type 2 diabetes.

Support your joints: Sugar consumption can increase inflammation in the body. This can make joint pain worse, especially for those with arthritis. You can help reduce inflammation by cutting back on sugar.

Boost your mood: Sugar gives you a burst of energy or sugar rush. But it may leave you feeling anxious, irritable and jittery later on. A high-sugar diet may also be linked to an increased risk of depression in adults.

Try these tricks for quitting the sugar habit.

- ▶ Fill up on complex carbohydrates such as vegetables, fruits and grains.
- ▶ Satisfy your sugar cravings with fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries and apples.
- ▶ Snack on nuts and seeds instead of granola bars or candy.
- ▶ Sip smarter by choosing unsweetened tea or sparkling water instead of sweetened beverages.
- ▶ Experiment with using less sugar in your recipes. Try using unsweetened applesauce as a substitute for some of the sugar in a recipe.

Sources:

1. Harvard Health. "Added Sugar in the Diet." <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/added-sugar-in-the-diet/> (last reviewed/updated March 3, 2017)
2. WebMD. "How Does Too Much Sugar Affect Your Body?" <http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/how-sugar-affects-your-body> (last reviewed/updated March 23, 2017)

This is intended to be general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice before undertaking a new diet or exercise program.



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