

This is Exactly What Happens to Your Body When You Eat a Ton of Sugar

Source: *MSN Lifestyle*



The maximum amount of added sugar people should eat in a day is 150 calories (37.5 grams or 9 teaspoons) for men and 100 calories (25 grams or 6 teaspoons) for women, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

The body can handle, as in metabolize, at least six teaspoons of added sugar per day. The problem is that most people consume a lot more than that. Sugar is not only present in foods that taste very sweet.

Most Americans consume over three times what they should be, with teens and men munching on the largest amounts. The result is chaos, stress and overload for the body that can lead to both physical and mental illnesses.

Many packaged foods don't list how many teaspoons of sugar their products contain, making your job of keeping track very difficult. An easy trick to remember, AHA says, is that there are 4 calories per gram of sugar and 4 grams of sugar equal a teaspoon. If a label says 10 grams of sugar per serving size, that means it has 2.5 teaspoons of it or 40 calories.

1. Liver is overloaded

The liver processes sugar in the same way it processes alcohol (both are slowly killing you). The fructose in the refined sugar can only be metabolized by the liver (unlike glucose). Therefore,

consuming a lot will tax the organ too much and can eventually lead to liver disease, according to the Global Healing Center. Swelling and bloating after a meal and the inability to lose weight are possible indicators of liver dysfunction.

2. You are still hungry

Fructose plays tricks on your brain. The sugar affects your metabolism by turning off your body's appetite-control system, studies have shown. As a result, you're not producing insulin. The vicious cycle continues with ghrelin, or "the hunger hormone," being suppressed, which leads to leptin, or "the satiety hormone," not being produced, leaving you hungry. The common side effects are overeating and insulin resistance.

3. Your bad cholesterol is up

Consuming lots of sugar lowers your "good" cholesterol and spikes your triglycerides, the fat associated with heart disease and stroke, according to research. In fact, some studies suggest that consuming too much refined sugar, not fat, is the leading cause of heart disease, America's No. 1 killer, due to the negative effects it has on the metabolism.

4. Blood sugar levels skyrocket

In a recent study, kids who cut added sugars from their diets for just nine days showed dramatic improvements in cholesterol and blood sugar levels, irrespective of weight change. Blood sugar can be used for energy, but the sugar that the body doesn't need right away is stored in cells for later use, potentially leading to all kinds of health issues from diabetes to heart disease.

5. You forget things

This may seem like a surprise but it shouldn't be. After all, both obesity and diabetes have been named risk factors for cognitive impairment, especially dementia, according to research (See why exercise helps). Another study found a connection between diets containing a lot of high fructose corn syrup and reduced performance in the hippocampus, which helps form memories and regulate emotions.

6. You are getting addicted

Sugar addiction is a real thing. Sugar is noteworthy as a substance that releases opioids and dopamine. So consuming a lot of refined processed sugars leads to the production of the brain's natural opioids, which is key in the process of getting addicted to anything. The brain eventually reacts as if you were giving it morphine, as research has shown.

7. Tooth enamel is getting destroyed

Listen to your dentist when he or she tell you that sugar is bad for your teeth (even sugar-free soda is). The connection between sugar and cavities has been well-known for years. The bacteria in the teeth feed on sugar, creating acid that damages the enamel, studies have shown. The more sugar you consume, the more damage you inflict on your teeth.

8. It makes you tired

After the sugar rush comes the sugar crash. A recent study by the University of Illinois found that, matched calorie for calorie with the simple sugar glucose, fructose causes significant weight gain, physical inactivity, and body fat deposition. The mice that consumed more sugars traveled about 20 percent less, possibly because they gained weight.

9. You are a step closer to depression

Behavioral changes may be due to "a combination of both sugar and fat, according to research. Eating foods high in sugar decreases brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that helps cells communicate to learn and form memories. Lower levels of BDNF are linked to higher blood glucose levels, increasing the risk of depression and Alzheimer's.

10. Your skin suffers

Sugary foods have been associated with inflammation. The glucose and fructose lead to the production of enzymes that break down the collagen and elastin in the skin eventually causing wrinkles and sagging, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. Findings from research suggest that a diet containing lots of sugar or other refined carbohydrates can accelerate aging.

11. You're setting the body for weight gain

By consuming sugary snacks, you are replacing nutritionally-dense foods, eating empty calories. Whatever the body doesn't burn as energy it will store as fat, but you'll be hungry much sooner because the body doesn't have enough nutrients. The vicious cycle of eating and not burning enough continues, resulting in extra pounds. Also, sugar, no matter where it's coming from, tends to increase fat levels in the blood.

12. Immune system is immediately weakened for hours

Consuming just 100 grams (3.5 oz.) of sugar leads to lower counts of white blood cells for up to five hours, according to a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, and increase disease susceptibility. The sugar causes the white blood cells to be about 40 percent less effective at killing germs. Sugar impacts them by competing for space with Vitamin C, according to Health Science.

13. Blood pressure increases

Salty foods are not the only cause of hypertension. Too much added sugar has the same effect. Researchers observed more than 4,500 people without a history of hypertension, consuming 74 or more grams of sugar a day. They found strong connection with increased blood pressure. Other research has found that drinking 60 grams of fructose caused a spike in blood pressure two hours later and can lead to nerve damage.