

Sugar Cravings 101

The average daily sugar intake for Canadians is 110 grams of sugar, approximately 26 tablespoons. Diabetes Canada recommends to limit sugar intake to no more than 50 grams per day.

It is not unusual for people in our modern-day society to experience sugar cravings and consume excess sugar in their diets. **A sugar craving is a learned behavior influenced by hormones and external stimuli** – such as seeing a chocolate bar commercial on TV late at night before bed.

High sugar intake is also known to increase unhealthy fats - triglycerides and LDL cholesterol in our blood while reducing the healthy HDL cholesterol. Excess sugar is associated with inflammation that can raise heart disease risk. Therefore, **eating too much sugar may result in weight gain contributing to the development of chronic disease such as obesity, pre-diabetes, and heart disease.** It has been proven that sugar can be addictive for many and even with knowledge of the health consequences, it may still be challenging to stop eating sugar. Fortunately, there are ways to fight sugar cravings and regulate sugar intake!



5 Tips to Reduce Sugar Intake

Tip 1. Reduce Sugar Intake by Reading Food Labels. Aim for no more than 50 grams of sugar per day. Look for “sugars” in the “carbohydrates” section of the nutrition label.

Tip 2. Drink Water to Stay Hydrated. Sometimes the body feels like it is craving sugary and salty food, when in fact the body is dehydrated and really needs water. It is recommended to drink an average of 2-3 litres or 6-8 cups of water per day for optimal hydration.

Tip 3. Eliminate Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Soft Drinks. Research shows a strong positive association between high intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain/obesity in both children and adults.

Tip 4. Eat Smaller Frequent Meals. Eating smaller portions of healthy meals throughout the day can help stabilize blood sugar levels and reduce cravings. Instead of just three large portions of food - spacing out meals to about every 3 hours (8:00am, 11:00am, 2:00pm, etc.) will help reduce large spikes and dips in blood sugar.



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Tip 5. Eat Plenty of Greens and Vegetables. Eating processed sugar drains minerals from the body and can cause more cravings. Rich in vitamins, minerals, and loaded with nutrition – **vegetables such as broccoli, peas, and sweet potato can help boost your energy and reduce cravings for sugar and processed foods.**



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