

I Quit Sugar...

* *and got clean*

* *got well*

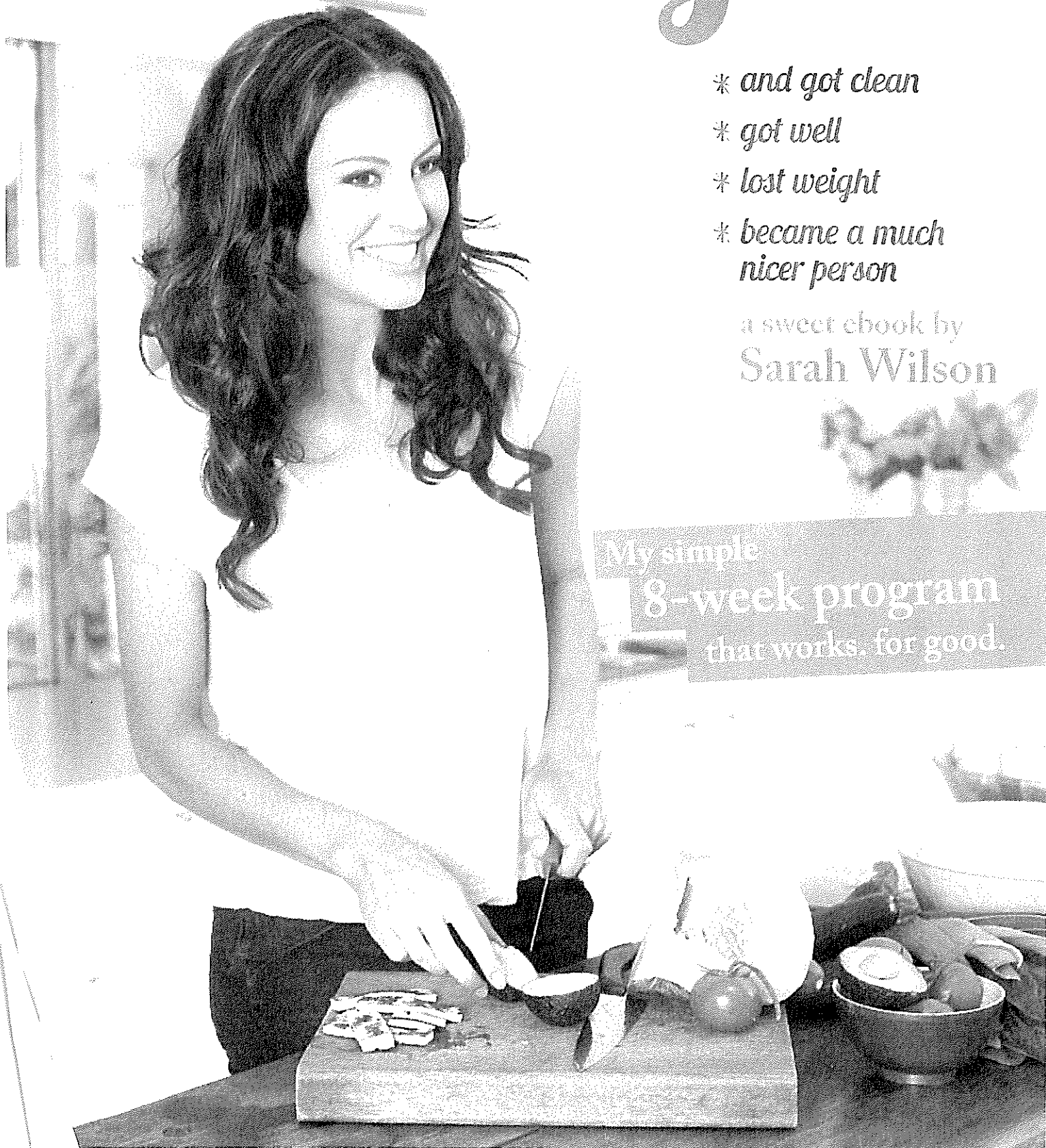
* *lost weight*

* *became a much
nicer person*

a sweet ebook by
Sarah Wilson

My simple

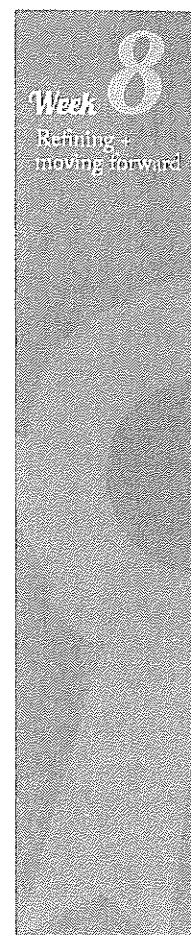
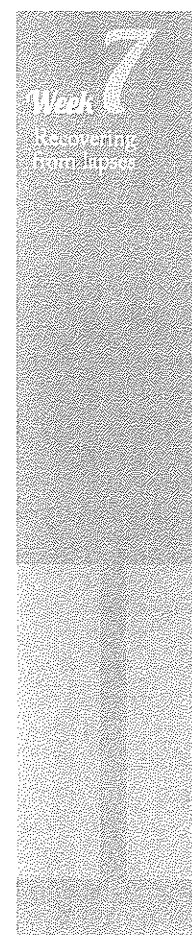
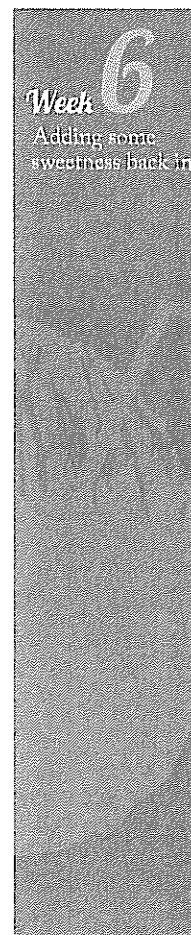
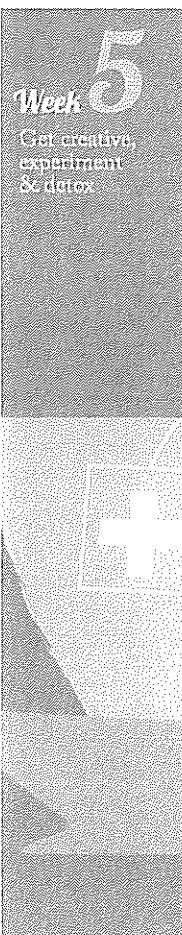
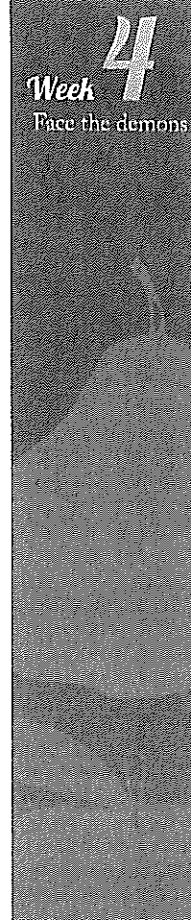
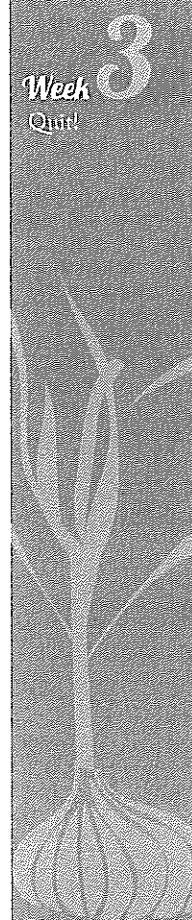
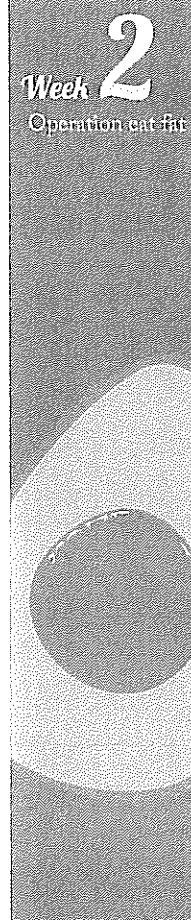
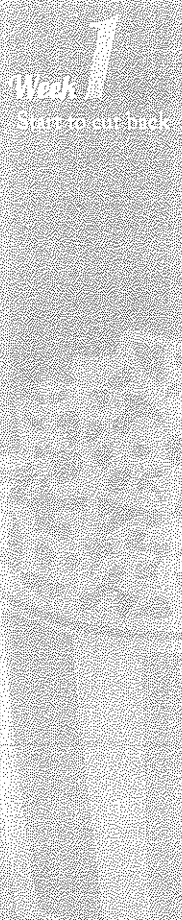
8-week program
that works. for good.



Contents

This is a 30-day journal designed by Sue Eshel and Anna H. Rosenblum to help you put together with the generous help of Jo Roster and Shayne Tilley.

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I consulted dozens of experts and did my own research as a qualified health coach. I read *Sweet Poison* and then interviewed its author *David Gillespie* – some of my thinking is inspired by his work. I experimented, using myself as a guinea pig, and eventually assembled a swag of techniques that worked. Then I got serious and committed.

I'm no white-coated expert. But I *did* succeed in ridding my life of sugar and I *did* experience first-hand what worked and what didn't. Now I want to share what I found and help as many people as I can make the leap. Ergo, this little ebook.

We have a gnarly, deep-rooted resistance to quitting sugar.

We grow up with a full-on emotional and physical attachment to sugar. Just the idea of not being able to turn to it when we're feeling a little lost or tired or bored or emotionally bereft terrifies us.

If not a sweet treat, then what?

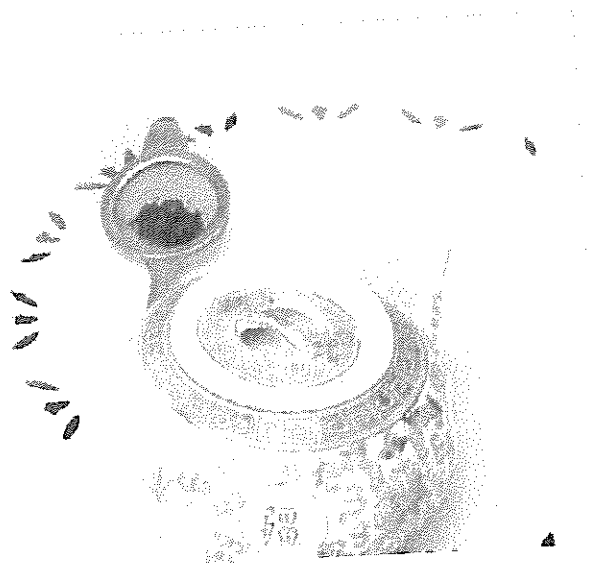
Well, I'll tell you what: a mind and body that's clean and clear.

This I Quit Sugar ebook will show you how to take sugar out of your diet and get well. It's a step-by-step guide full of tips, tricks and techniques that helped *me* eliminate the white stuff for good. And that I believe will help the average sugar addict to do the same.

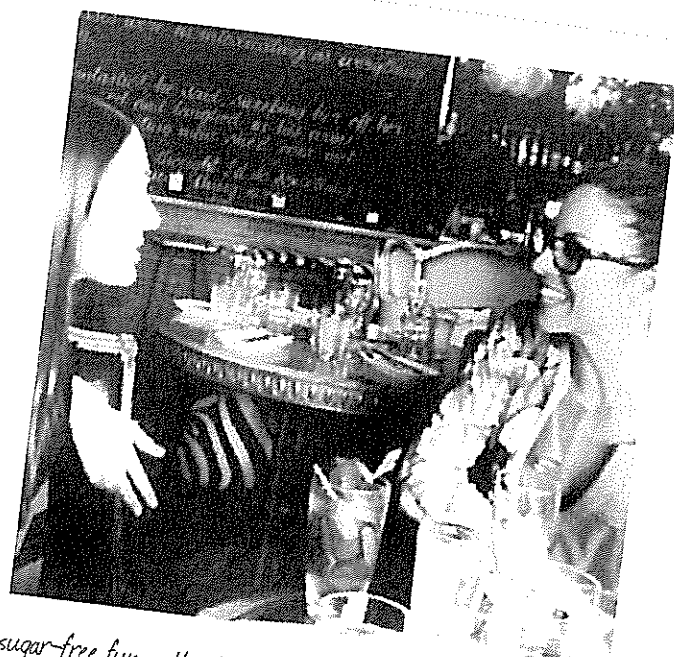
So, what's the bang for your buck here?

- ✓ My tried 'n tested 8-week quit plan
- ✓ The key philosophies and principles for tackling addiction (you'll see these highlighted in *italics* along the way)
- ✓ A blow-by-blow explanation of why sugar is making you feel crap
- ✓ Recipes for new snacks and breakfast ideas
- ✓ A shopping list of new, better-than-sugar foods.

Sarah
xx



this much you will soon learn tea is your friend!



sugar-free fun – the true story!

*I was a sugar addict. I didn't look like one.
I didn't drink Coke or put sugar in my coffee.
I've never eaten a Krispy Kreme donut, and
ice cream barely me.*

But here's the thing: I was a covert addict. I hid behind the so-called "healthy sugars" like honey and dark chocolate and... fruit. Which made things harder in some ways because first I had to face my denial.

My attachment started when, as a teenager, I moved into town from the country (where we ate very naturally). A cocktail of girl hormones, newfound access to malls and convenience stores, as well as a kid-in-candy-store delight with foods I'd been previously denied, brought it on. I went sugar crazy.

I remember at university not being able to function if I didn't have a cinnamon scroll at 10am. I loved the pink icing blob in the middle. And convinced myself the dried currents made it healthy.

Over time, this wasn't enough. I'd then eat an apple pie after lunch. And some chocolate. Soon, I was a riding a horrible rollercoaster of sugar highs and lows. I was bingeing. Then starving myself the rest of the day.

I got sick off the back of this reactionary eating – very sick. I developed mood disorders and sleep problems and finally I developed adrenal issues and my first autoimmune disease – Graves, or overactive thyroid. Ever since, I've had gut problems linked to bad gut balance.

I was eating
30
*teaspoons of sugar
or more every day*

Over time I swapped my pink-blobbed processed sugary carbs for the "healthy" sugary treats. And, yeah, ate less sugar overall. But all the symptoms above continued. I didn't put it down to sugar **completely**. But I knew it was a major player.

For the past ten years I've eaten very well. But up until seven months ago I was still eating sugar **every** day. After **every** meal. And before bed. I was still addicted.

Here's a snapshot of my sugar consumption:

Here's a snapshot: three pieces of fruit a day, a handful of dried fruit in my porridge, a teaspoon or two of honey in my tea, a small (35g) bar of dark chocolate after lunch, and after dinner honey drizzled on yoghurt, or dessert (if I was out).

A conservative day would see me consume about 30 teaspoons of sugar, just in that rundown of snacks above. That's not counting the hidden sugar in things like tomato sauce and other everyday foodstuffs.

I told myself I ate "good" sugar and convinced myself I didn't have a problem.

But as you'll learn in a moment, sugar is sugar. Sure, the other ingredients mixed in with the sugar in, say, a muesli bar or a piece of fruit were good for me. But the chemical composition of sugar – whether it's in a mango or a Mars bar – remains the same.

So what tipped me over? Why did I finally do it? It was a conflation of reasons:

Reason #1

I was eating way more sugar than we're designed to eat.

Even though I was eating MUCH less sugar than the average Australian and many would say my diet looked very healthy, it was too much.

The American Heart Association recommends that women consume no more than 100 calories a day from added sugar and men take in no more than 150 calories per day. That translates into about six teaspoons for women and nine teaspoons for men, inclusive of hidden sugars.

Australian guidelines vary and are hazy when it comes to defining "added sugar" (does it include the sugar in barbeque sauce or in the fruit added to yoghurt?). The amounts vary from 85-110g a day, which is up to 26 teaspoons. Those who espouse eating sugar at the levels we used to before the "invention of sugar" and it's related chronic diseases in the 1800s suggest 20g (5 teaspoons) a day is the aim. Which ain't much.

Reason #2

I struggled to maintain it at this level.

If someone put a cheesecake in front of me, or a bag of chocolate bullets, or a family-size block of chocolate ... and I was having a weak moment... I'd damn well eat the lot. Once I got a taste, I couldn't control myself.

It was uncool and undignified.

Reason #3

Autoimmune disease (or adrenal issues or an excitable personality) + sugar = bad story

I have an autoimmune disease. I suspect it is – to an extent – linked to my life-long sugar habit. And is certainly made worse by sugar. Anyone with a compromised system simply cannot afford to have their

stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol), nor their neurotransmitter levels (dopamine), nor their insulin levels tipped off balance by sugar. Hard, cold, but oddly motivating fact!

Reason #4

I wanted to lose weight.

I'd put on weight (12kg) from thyroid disease a few years back and hadn't been able to shift it. It wasn't a core issue for me. But it played on my mind. I was keen to see if cutting sugar cut the mustard.

Reason #5

I was bored.

I was over riding the rollercoaster of my sugar highs and lows and my obsession with my next fix. And I figured it was time to at least try eliminating sugar. Just to see what happened.

To be honest I committed to "just trying it out". But after two weeks I felt so much clearer and cleaner I kept going. And going.

I wasn't draconian about it.

I just remained curious...

To see how my body responded. And this is what I really want to share with everyone setting out on this journey...

Treat quitting sugar as an experiment. Not a life sentence.

You don't have to stick with it.

But you might just choose to.

This is a principle I apply to many aspects of my life. Like exercise. I commit to exercising 20 minutes every day (it's the "every day" bit that counts). I don't baulk at the idea of 20 minutes, so I do it without fuss. Plus, once I set out for a jog or a swim for 20 minutes, I get engaged and invariably go for a bit longer. I apply the same psychology to quitting sugar. It works!

I should be eating no more than **6** *teaspoons of sugar a day*



Consider this:

- ▮ We're eating more low-fat food than ever before
- ▮ We're joining more gyms
- ▮ Yet we're putting on more weight

Then consider this:

- ▮ Today we eat more than a kilo of sugar a week. Just 150 years ago we ate next to none.

And this:

- ▮ The low-fat industry is big business
- ▮ Low-fat food often contains more sugar than the whole-food version (sugar is added to make a food taste more like the original)
- ▮ So there is a lot of resistance to eliminating sugar. The sugar and corn industries in many countries are propped up by government tariffs.

A picture forms, right? I don't want to spell things out with outrage and finger pointing. But I will highlight that quitting sugar is something that's not about to be encouraged by a big health initiative any time soon. We have to make the change ourselves, consciously.

"I eat whatever I want now. I just cut out sugar and my weight (no longer) yo-yos. I don't need to diet or cut back on food, because my weight and appetite is stable since I cut out sugar." *Sue*

I don't know. I'm not telling you to do anything. This ebook is just an invitation to try things out. See if it does good stuff for you.

But tell me,

Do you get an energy slump in the afternoon? Do you need something sweet after lunch or dinner?

How's your stomach... bloated much?

Can you seriously eat one piece of cake...and walk away? Or leave a packet of chocolate biscuits in the fridge and only eat one or two at a time?

Are you "podgy" around the middle, perhaps even slim everywhere else? Some time between high school and now you lost your waistline and it's never come back?

Do you often feel unclear? Like you just can't get to what your head is really trying to say?

I ticked "yes to most of the above" and had a sneaking suspicion that sugar might be the thing making me feel baseline—crappy. If you do, too, then you might like to take up the invitation and see if quitting works. It did for hundreds of people who read my blog posts and then took the plunge:

"I now don't eat emotionally and my appetite is regular and not all out of whack from all the sugar messing with my insulin etc. I am never hungry or crave foods like I used to when sugar was in my diet." *Pam*

"I have had so many people comment on how well I look, and ask how much weight I've lost. The reality is that I haven't lost much weight at all, but I no longer have that bloating around the face and stomach, which makes my shape much better. I also feel so well – both physically and mentally." *J.G.*

"I've noticed that the kids seem less hungry and quite satisfied at dinner time since I've taken sugar from our diet." *Vanessa*

"I've been sugar-free for about six months and I've lost 12kgs." *John*

"I'm on week 5 and I too am finding that my moods are more stable, bloating has gone and I'm no longer craving it!" *Mia*

"It's been three months and I have lost 7 kilos, gotten rid of my post baby belly and I feel fantastic." *No name provided*

"A week ago I ceased it. All sugar gone. Today (and yesterday too, and the day before that...) I woke up feeling calm. It's life changing." *Liv*

* Please note that this is not a medical recommendation and is not intended to replace medical advice.

I'll be upfront. There are a few harsh-ish realities to bear in mind:

Quitting, I found, took about two months. Studies say it takes between 21 and 66 days to change a habit. Sugar is a gnarly habit; I advise pacing yourself. Do it properly over 8 weeks.

When you quit sugar, you quit ALL of it. Fruit, fruit juice, agave and honey included. Some nutritionists advise just cutting out the added sugar. But a lot of the sugar experts agree: it's best to get rid of all of it at

first, so you can break the addiction.

After a few weeks, once my addiction was broken, I found I felt fine to introduce a few pieces of fruit a day back into my diet, as well as some table sugar alternatives. But we'll get to that later.

There is a detox period where you will feel like crap. This lasted only a week or two for me. For some it can last 6 weeks. Just sayin'. After that, it's a non-issue. I promise.

So. Enough. Let's plunge in...

I scoured the research for about three months. I'm still refining my tricks and techniques. I tried different approaches...but this is what worked for me and for many I've met on my sugarless pilgrimage.

To get started:

1. Commit to an "end experiment." You don't have to commit beyond that if you don't want to. Take this "let's just see" approach and it will make the process less onerous.

2. Find a Diabetes Coach or you — it DOES make it easier. Even just to have someone to cook new foods with.

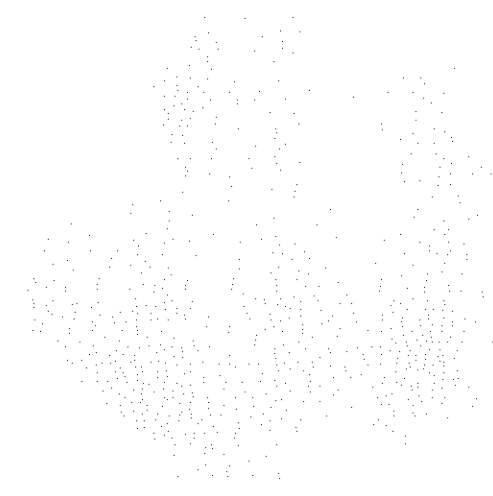
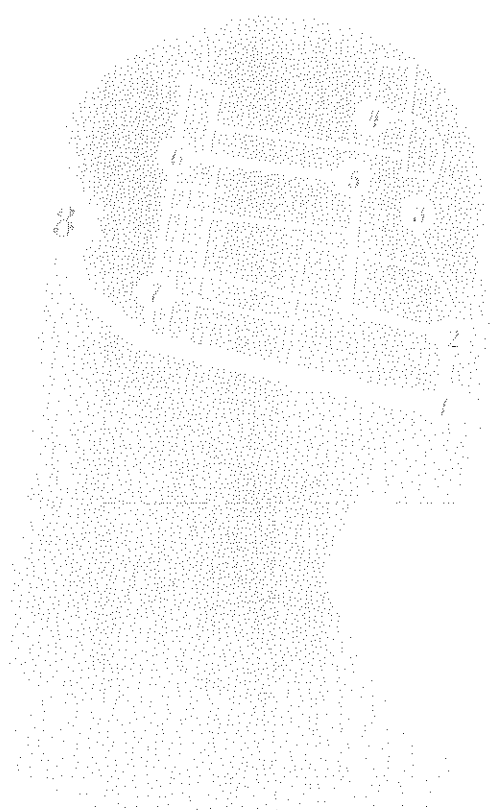
3. Find a book as much information on the science of sugar absorption and sugar politics as you can. It will help remind you of WHY you're doing it, while you're doing it.

4. Remind yourself Diets don't work, forcing doesn't work. The human experience doesn't respond to "restrictive thinking". I've found that being kind and nurturing with yourself does work. You're doing this, not because you have to, but because it might make you feel better. Be alive to this as often as you can through this process.

5. Find a coach or class. I found it helped to view this process as a strengthening exercise.

Change doesn't happen with an about-face. It happens by building up habits in our minds. Slowly, by flexing regularly, we build new neural pathways in our brains until we're doing things differently, effortlessly. So every day that we flex our "I'm not eating sugar, thanks" muscle, the stronger we get.

6. Find a list I'll be mentioning a bunch of different ingredients along the way. Flick to the end of the ebook for the full list and details in The Shopping List.



Week 1

Start to cut back

Some experts advise going cold turkey from the outset. Me, not so much. I think it's worth having a little run-up. My theory is that humans respond badly to outright bans. We see a *Wet Paint: Don't Touch* sign – we just want to touch it! Ditto with banning food. We're told to stop eating a certain food – it's all we think about, it's all we want to eat.

Gently. Calmly. That's how we're going to do this.

Goal 1

Pare back on sugar and refined carbohydrates (doughnuts, bready and white floury things, etc). Just start to become more conscious and make a few simple swaps:

- ✦ Toast and vegemite instead of toast with jam
- ✦ Eggs on toast instead of muesli and sweet yoghurt
- ✦ Popcorn at the movies instead of a bag of Maltesers

This first week is about a few easy, simple changes that aren't too detailed or complicated, but that get you aware of options. The less sugar in your system before you enter Week 2, the easier it will be. Your gut will be in a better place to deal with the adjustment and the cravings will be milder.

Stick to this experimental "I'm just playing with the idea" phase for 1-2 weeks. Not too long. You don't want to get bored of the experiment.



Let's talk some scientific-stuff

To be clear – it's fructose that's the enemy.

Not sugar, per se. When I talk about quitting sugar, I'm talking about quitting fructose.

Problem #1: fructose makes us eat more

Now here's the gist of the matter: every molecule we stick in our gobs has corresponding appetite hormones. And when we've eaten enough of said molecule, these hormones tell our brains, "OK kiddo, we're full now. Stop eating." Our bodies are good that way; we're designed to eat only as much as we need.

Every molecule, that is, except fructose.

Odd you might say...

This is because back when we were cave people, sugar was both highly valuable (as insta-energy for chasing wildebeest) and extremely rare (a berry here and there). Thus we evolved with no fructose "full switch". This was so that when we did stumble on a berry bush we could gorge ourselves stupid (and store it as insta-fat).

All very well back when sugar was rare and we had to work hard to get it. But now it's ludicrously abundant and we barely have to extend an arm to get at it. Having no "off switch" is a massive liability!

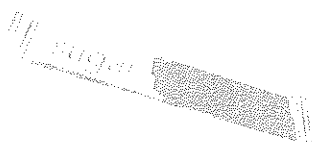
Problem #2: fructose converts directly to fat

The way fructose is converted in our bodies means it's not used upfront as energy, but converted directly to fat. It also becomes, as David Gillespie says in *Sweet Poison*, "porridge in our arteries", leading to cholesterol and cancer. And the rest.

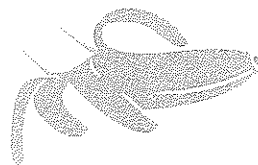
"Eating fructose is like eating fat that your body can't detect as fat...and makes us eat more fat."

– David Gillespie

For more detail on this you really should read **David Gillespie's *Sweet Poison***, and follow him on **Twitter**.



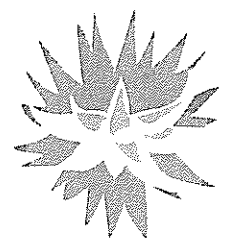
*Table sugar =
50% fructose,
50% sucrose*



*One banana =
about 55% sugar,
over half of
which is fructose*



*Honey =
40% fructose*



*Maple =
often up to 90%
fructose*

Week 2

Operation eat fat

Yes, I'm suggesting you eat fat. I know it's unconventional, but it works. Actually, it's this little trick that made my sugar-quitting experiment work.

Hear me out.

As I say, humans aren't designed to restrict intake of food. When we fast, our obedient little bodies are programmed to think we're in famine or in an emergency and thus particular hormones and urges kick in to ensure our survival.

So...

1. We become obsessed with seeking out food (understandable, really), and
2. Our systems store ANY calories ingested for safe keeping (again, makes sense).

Ergo, diets don't work. Actually, they're counter-effective. They mostly make you PUT ON weight.

Which is why I found this interim phase so, so, so important when quitting sugar. We have to replace what we're taking out...

For both psychological reasons (so we don't get depressed and frustrated from the deprivation) and for physiological reasons (so our bodies don't go into famine mode).

Do this:

Eat fat and protein. I'm talking good fat. Wholesome, unprocessed fats.

The reason is two-fold.

1. It takes care of the craving for a "treat" – which is part of the sugar addiction. When I replaced my afternoon chocolate "treat" with a fatty, protein-y food, I didn't feel like I was denying myself – emotionally or physically.
2. Fat and protein fills us up. Because that's what they do. They curb the cravings.

Do this:

* Be conscious.

As you switch to this kind of eating, take note of how quickly you feel full, whether your cravings are lessened, whether you feel like you're "missing out on something". I can't stress enough how important it is to witness these kinds of changes. Understanding, as well as having a more intimate relationship with, your internals will strengthen your resolve over the next few weeks. Find your own way to do this: blogging, a morning journal, sharing with your IQS mate...

* Keep snacking.

At least for now. Remember this – if you've been a sugar addict (mild, medium or heavy), you'll probably have some hypoglycemic issues. Which is why you have slumps at 11am and 4pm. I'm betting you've been berating yourself for this, because it generally means you reach for sugar.

But the reality is, you probably need to be eating at these times... just not sugar.

Eating regular small meals – 5-6 times a day – is what your body is needing (it might not longterm, once you've recalibrated, but for now it does). The simple solution is to snack. But on different stuff. I list some suggestions on the next page.



Find your own way to having a more intimate relationship with your internals: blogging, a morning journal, sharing with your IQS mate...

Which fats?

There are many mixed, mostly wrong messages about fat. Many fats are vital. We need fats for immune health and digestion and metabolism. They act as antioxidants and also get rid of heavy metals and toxins in our systems.

I personally work to the following:

- I cook with olive oil and coconut oil. Coconut oil is a saturated fat, but is VERY good for us – it's anti-inflammatory and an anti-fungal and the only oil that doesn't change structure with heat.
- I pour with walnut, macadamia, flaxseed and chia oil (do not cook with these – they turn unhealthy with heat).
- I don't worry too much about animal fat – I eat chicken skin and bacon fat. Just not excessively. I believe we are meant to eat the whole food. And once you allow yourself this fat, you find you get full on it quickly and don't need a lot of it.
- I eat full-fat dairy. Again, the whole foods argument. When the fat is taken out, a lot of the enzymes that help break down the lactose are also taken out. I found when I swapped to full-fat milk I had no digestion problems. You might too. Try it.
- Organic butter is my friend.
- * I don't touch: canola (from rapeseed), safflower, sunflower, soya bean and corn oils.

Try these replacement fat/protein "treats":

- * When the 3pm cravings hit: try some grilled haloumi – if you have a sandwich press in the office, pop a few slices in and in minutes you have some snack-a-licious goodness.
- * After dinner, try grilling walnuts, or tossing them in a pan, and sprinkling on a big splodge of yoghurt. I sprinkle some cinnamon on top, too. Or some vanilla powder.
- * At a restaurant order an extra calamari dish after dinner instead of dessert. I do.
- * A thick dollop of macadamia or almond paste on a rice cake hits the spot if I'm still hungry after lunch.

And mix into your cooking:

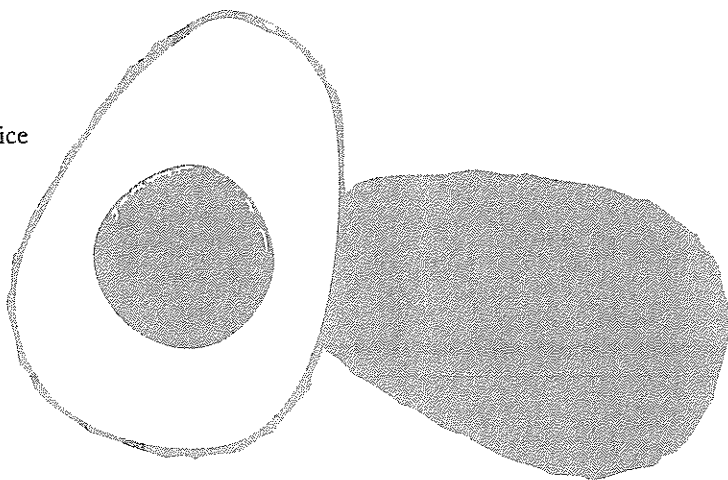
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (toast in a pan until they start to pop – about a minute). Toss on salads, or on top of your porridge or yoghurt.
- Avocado. I love it under cheese on toasted sandwiches.
- Play with different oils. I pour walnut oil (good for dry eyes) on yoghurt and dollop the lot on casseroles. Flaxseed (good for inflammation) is great on salads.
- Eggs and more eggs. Toss two through a pumpkin stir-fry: gives it a great "cheesy" texture.
- Bacon...in small doses. I chop up two rashers and add to a hearty lentil and vegetable soup. I use it for a lush flavour hit.
- Goats cheese. I sprinkle a chunk on a salad.



Know this:

Fat doesn't make you fat, sugar does

Eating more fat...scary!? Actually, no. And this is something we need to get over. I'm not going to go into the history of why we've been fed the anti-fat line (if this interests, you might like to read "*Is Sugar Toxic?*" on The New York Times website. Or read *Gary Taubs' books*), but for now it's worth noting that the research that the "anti-fat" argument is based on has been proven to be flawed.



* The facts are these:

Fat fills us up - so we can't gorge on it.

As I mention earlier, fats and proteins (and carbs) have a corresponding appetite hormone that act as messengers: "Oh, hello! Better tell the brain we have a visitor". The brain then issues the edict: "Time to shut down appetite". You've probably noticed when you eat cheese or nuts they get rid of hunger straight away. Yeah?

- So, all things being equal (ie. our systems are in balance), we don't get fat from eating fat and protein. Our bodies ensure this. We get full. We move on... to hobbies... and the like.
- Add to this, fat is actually required to activate metabolism and to synthesize Vitamin D, which is also required for metabolism. Eating (good) fat can actually help you lose weight. Totally true story.

BUT, we gorge on sugar. In fact we're

designed to. When we eat fructose our body doesn't notice it in our system. It goes undetected. And so we can eat and eat and eat it, but our bodies don't feel full. Which is why you can drink a JUMBO-sized juice or soft drink. People do. All the time. Can you imagine drinking that much yoghurt? It would be pretty much impossible.

Some say fructose is good because it doesn't cause insulin spikes (as glucose does). You might see agave described as a low-GI sugar alternative... This can actually be a bad thing, in part because insulin is an appetite control hormone.

Plus, as mentioned above, we're programmed to actively seek out and binge on sugar... because way back when it was so very rare, we had to stock up when we could.

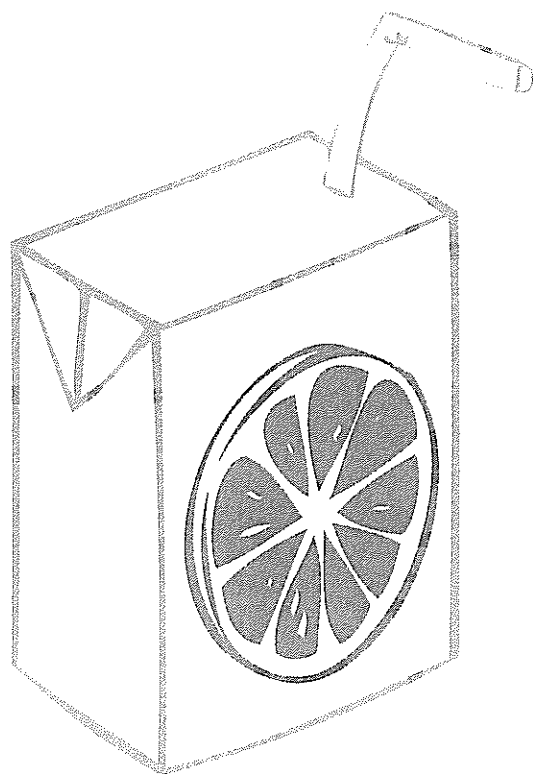
Plus, sugar turns directly to fat. Just to ensure you were listening: the way fructose is converted to energy in our bodies means that it side-steps the fat-creation control mechanism in the liver and is converted directly to fatty acids, and then body fat.

Sugar has been shown to muck with our hormonal systems, in complex ways, leading to cravings and deficiencies. Thus adding to the binge cycles.

When we're in balance, and eating no sugar, our bodies find a happy homeostasis. A happy weight.

We have few cravings. We get full and genuinely lose interest in food. We burn off the calories in our system. And only then do we feel hungry again (another set of hormones tell the brain we're hungry once more).

This is not some magical state of utopia. It's what our bodies do on their own.



My aim when I set out to quit sugar was to get my body back to a balanced state.

So I could rediscover my natural appetite mechanisms. Instead of reacting from craving to craving. And to find my happy weight.

Week

3

Quit!

If you've pared back and added in fat, this will not be (too!) hard.

Many argue that when you quit sugar you must quit ALL OF IT for life. I agree, all of it must go. *In the first instance.* (Down the track we can lighten up a bit... more on this in a moment.)

The reason for the cold turkey approach is that your body needs to recalibrate. You need to find the new set-point. Allowing a little sugar in won't allow your confused system to rid itself of cravings and swings.

Also, I found that quitting it all – not making exceptions – was easier.

When we allow exceptions we have to deliberate. If I allow apples, can I also allow pears? If I allow one sugar day a week, should it be Tuesday or Wednesday?

Too hard! And likely to lead to a domino-effect of exceptions.

Forget that! Do it for real. Get real. Life works better when you do.

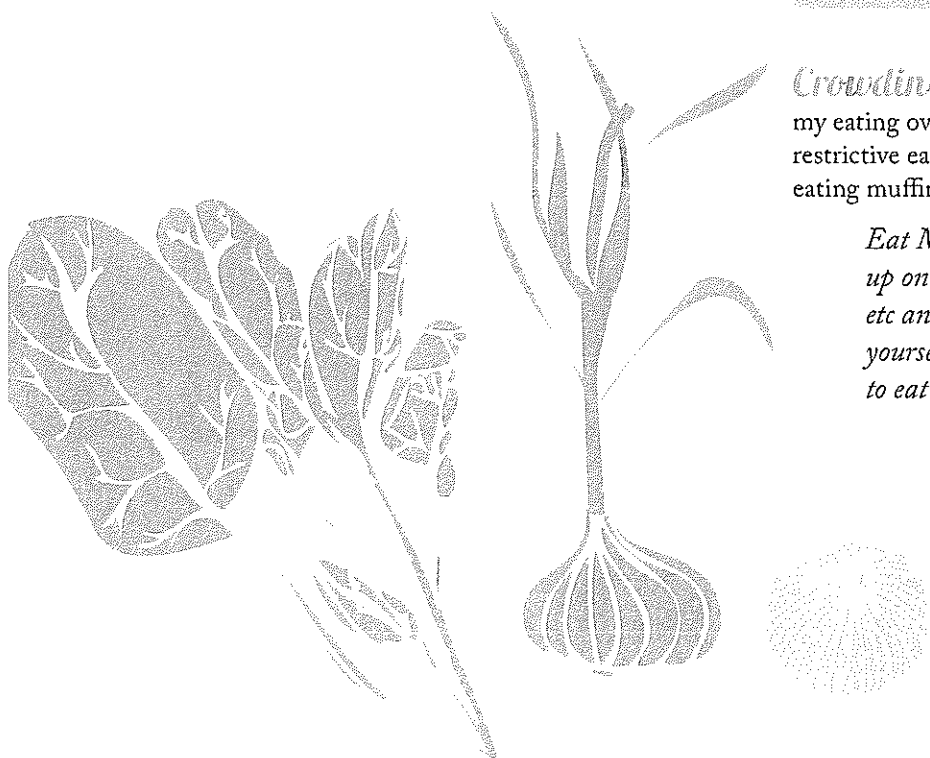
Do this:

From today, the below – no exceptions – must go:

- Fruit
- Fruit juice
- Dried fruit (including muesli and muesli bars) and jams (even if it says no added sugar)
- Tomato and barbecue sauces (they contain up to 50% sugar... more than chocolate topping!)
- Any condiment containing sugar
- Balsamic vinegar (about 15% sugar)
- Flavoured yoghurts (including those that say "no added sugar"... read the label, it's often there disguised as fruit puree)
- Honey
- Agave
- Brown and coconut sugar
- And obviously chocolate, soft drinks, etc.

Crowding Out: This is a theory I subscribe to with my eating overall. Rather than engage in prohibitive, restrictive eating ("I must quit chocolate", "I have to stop eating muffins"), swap tactics.

Eat MORE of the good stuff. Each meal, load up on green vegetables, nuts, healthy grains, eggs etc and "crowd out" the "bad food". That is, stuff yourself with spinach and you won't get around to eating chocolate.



Here's how to read those bloody food labels:

On the labels, where it says 'sugars', it's referring to all sugar - glucose, fructose, and lactose. Different sugars contain different amounts of fructose eg: table sugar is 50% glucose and 50% fructose, while the sugar in milk is lactose and contains no fructose. So, it's confusing.

I've chatted to different experts for an overall rule of thumb. Generally this is the vibe:

- * **Eat products with less than 3-6g of sugar per 100g or 100mls.**
- * **And for dairy, stay under 8g of sugar per 100g or 100mls.** The first 4.7g of sugar will be lactose, which is fine. Anything on top of that is added sugar.
- * **Drink liquids that contain no sugar only.** This is because a standard drink is around 350ml, so even a few grams/100ml is too much.

More than this and you'll find by the end of the day your "incidental" sugar intake is way too high.

Tip: 4g of sugar = 1 tsp of sugar = A sugar cube

Beware: of the "No added sugar" label. Manufacturers will slap one on. But look closely. Often it might contain other kinds of high fructose sugars (honey, agave) or fruit pulp.

Do this

Arm yourself with an arsenal of distractions.

Plan out a few activities that can satiate and take the place of the comfort drawn from sugar. Cutting emotional attachment is a huge part of this process. It's been the hardest bit for me.

For decades now, sugary foods have been my reward for when I finish a writing project, my distraction (when I have a blockage or something is hard), my supplement for intimacy, as well as a heavy, stodgy thing I place on top of the frothing anxiety in my stomach...to quash it.

I found changing a few lifestyle habits really helped. Personally, I sat down and wrote out all the moments that felt/were going to feel hard while quitting sugar. And then matched it with a fix. I really suggest you do the same. It's illuminating. And necessary.

Continued on next page...

What about wine?

You've possibly been scanning the pages looking for this bit... good news, then. Red and white wine and pure spirits (mixed with soda water) contain minimal fructose. This is because the fructose in the fruit used to make the spirit is what converts to alcohol. Which isn't a license to get drunk. Booze has it's own fat metabolism and health issues and is also addictive. Once you've cut out sugar you'll possibly find your tolerance is lower. One drink max a day is best.

Beware: tonic water is brimful of sugar... soda water only!



Challenging moments

Tina

*Mid-morning empty feeling or agitation
(especially in the face of a difficult task)*

I find eating breakfast a little later helps... I push it back so it coincides with my "snack attack". This might not work for anyone who's desperately hungry when they wake.

Afternoon slumpiness

I assign chores that require a walk... a visit to the post office etc. If no chore, I stroll to a park and back.

*Meeting for a coffee with friends
who tend to order biscuits or cakes*

I order a very large pot of chai to fill me up. The tea straining ritual also distracts me nicely.

Or I suggest a catch-up over a walk instead.

*Plane rides (I have a weakness
for free food in confined spaces!)*

I buy nuts at the airport. Most of the "Australiana" gift shops sell small packets of plain macadamias.

*After dinner when I'm after
a "sweet something"*

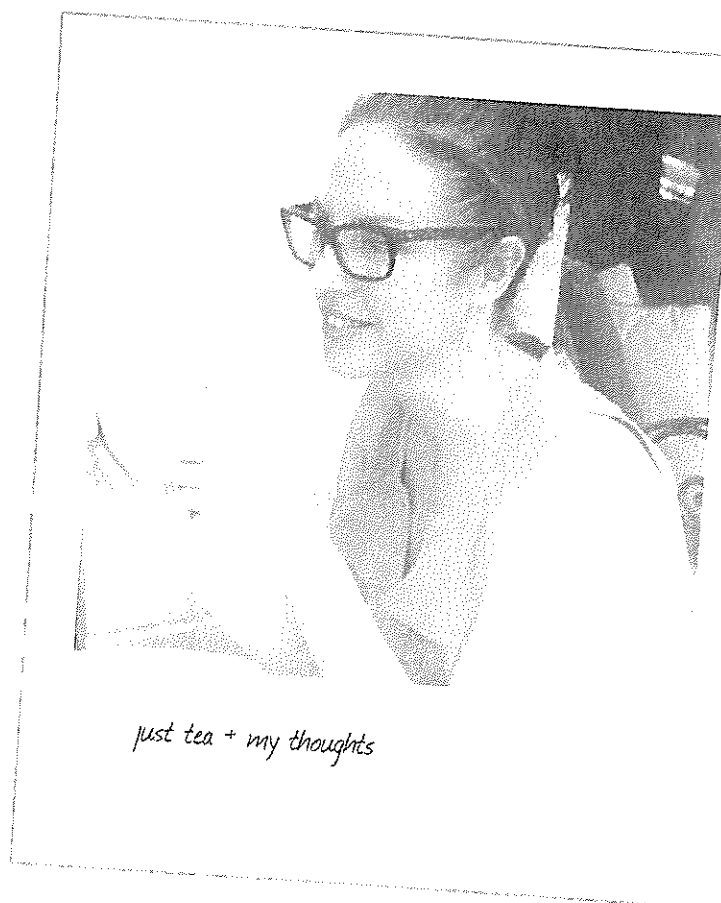
#1 Cheese. It's decadent and it fills me up immediately. Faster than nuts, I find.

#2 Have a bath and read a book. Sweetness in another shape!

#3 A reader on my blog suggested brushing your teeth after you finish dinner – a little radical, but clever.

*When I'm in the middle of a project
that makes me fidgety and anxious*

I get up. And burn a stick of incense. Then I make a pot of green tea.



* The 9 Cs of Good Health

I found that there were certain foods that helped me through this initial phase. These were high-protein foods or foods that picked me up in some way or were great “treat” foods. They all happened to start with “c”. Funnily enough.

cacao – you can buy raw cacao nibs at health food shops. They’re pure, raw cocoa – an amazing antioxidant that gives you an intense chocolate hit.

chia – add these little protein-y seeds to a smoothie or your yoghurt in the morning. They fill you up and do wonders for your digestion.

chai – oh, yes. Chai tea. The ritual of heating the milk and adding cardamom, cinnamon bark, ginger, licorice, then pouring cup after cup into a nice glass makes for very happy times.

haloumi – put a few slices of haloumi in a sandwich press, under the grill or in a pan and eat as an afternoon snack.

cinnamon – I sprinkle the powder on things, like my yoghurt. I’m also adding cinnamon nibs to my tea. It’s great for reducing inflammation, too (for anyone else with auto-immune issues!).

coconut butter – this stuff is sweet... but contains no fructose. It nips sugar cravings in their tracks. The whole baby coconut is best. But the packaged varieties are good, too.

chicken – I keep a bag of shaved chicken or turkey (from the deli at the supermarket) in the fridge and grab a small handful when my energy slumps a few hours before dinner.

coffee – after I quit sugar I was able to drink coffee again. I’d gone off it for three years because it got me too racy. Now I metabolise it just fine. On days I’m missing sweetness in my life I have it with milk. The lactose is lusciously satisfying.

Tip: If you used to drink yours with sugar, try it with stevia. A lot of cafes now provide stevia sachets instead of the nastier fake sugars.

coconut oil – again, very sweet. Add coconut oil to smoothies and cook with it (fry some pumpkin in it... it’s sublime!).

coconut water
cacao cinnamon
chia coconut
coffee cinnamon
cinnamon coconut
haloumi coconut
cacao coconut
chia coffee
cinnamon coconut
coconut oil

Week 4

Face the demons

Around about this stage I can almost guarantee a little sabotaging voice will pipe up:

Hang on, why am I doing this??! Should I be doing this?

Also, and this is a very bizarre factor: other people will try to sabotage you. Even get angry with you. It's funny. Everyone I know who's quit sugar has commented on the rough time they get from others. Their efforts are criticized as being misguided.

They find themselves defending their diet.

My explanation is this: we all know that sugar is not good for us and we all know – deep down – that we probably eat too much of it. But most people are so attached to it – emotionally and physically – that the idea of not eating it at all petrifies them. Viscerally.

I'm betting if we announced we were cutting out peanuts or popcorn it wouldn't prompt the same ire.

So when YOU bravely take the plunge and quit sugar, you hold a mirror up to others' fears. Does that make sense? You remind them of what they wish they could do. And so they get angry and lash out.

In the event of such an emergency, how about I provide you with some comebacks (best issued calmly and without a patronizing sneer):

They say: But sugar is natural!

You say: Indeed it is. But so is petroleum. And arsenic.

Here's the thing. We're designed to eat VERY little fructose. As in a few berries here and there. Honey on the rare occasion we stumble upon a hive. The addition of tablespoons (sometimes cups) of sugar to our meals via barbeque sauces and cereals and even popcorn is a very new thing. And not natural. And our bodies have not adjusted to it.

Our digestion and metabolisms haven't changed in 130,000 years. Our sugar intake, however, has. In just 150 years it's gone from 0kg to about 60kg a year.

Sugar is natural. The amount we're exposed to isn't.

They say: Cutting fruit out? That's ridiculous!

You say: Fruit contains fructose. And fructose is fructose, no matter the package it comes in.

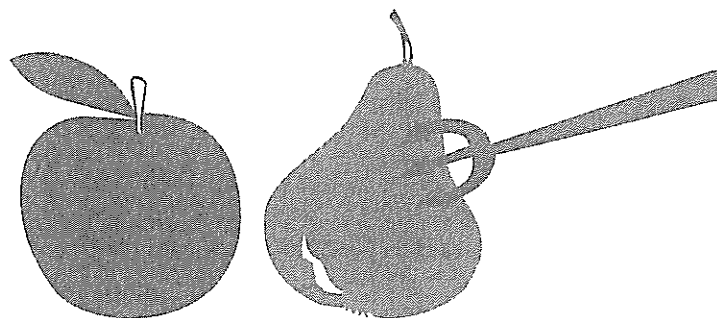
For sure: whole fruit also contain vitamins and other antioxidants that are great for us. And indeed the fibre and water in whole fruit diffuses the sugar content. But two things that ring true for me:

1. There's little nutritional content in fruit that you can't get from vegetables if you're eating a good variety.
2. We are designed to metabolise only a small amount of fructose a day, which is equivalent to 1-2 small pieces of fruit a day, which, as David says in *Sweet Poison*, is what we used to eat prior to the "invention" of sugar in the 1800s. If you're able to eliminate all other sources of fructose (ie all hidden sugars added to pasta sauces, bread etc) then eating 1-2 pieces of fruit is great. But few of us live like this. At which point you say to your doubter that this is why you're cutting out sugar... so that you can eat 1-2 pieces of fruit each day.

Also, it really is a very modern thing that we eat so much fruit. Our grandparents didn't eat four pieces a day. And when I was a kid, fruit juice was a treat... not something you drank from JUMBO containers each day.



And know this: I don't think it's a good thing to demonise fruit. Or any food that's legitimately nutritious. I just found it helpful to cut it out for two months while my body rebalanced. And to become aware of the fact that it does contain a lot of sugar and that it should be consumed mindfully. I simply tried it for myself.



They say: But we shouldn't be cutting food out, moderation is the answer!

You say: If only. Problem is moderation is nigh impossible with sugar. For so many of us it's all. Or, well, nothing.

Sugar is a drug. We know that sugar interacts with reward systems in the brain in much the same way as addictive drugs. Studies have found rats fed sugar not only became addicted, but when they were denied it for a short period, binged on larger quantities of sugar... and other substances like alcohol.

For many of us – albeit not all – a moderate amount of sugar is not achievable because even just a taste of it sets

off a desire for more. Much more. I personally can't eat two small squares of chocolate. I'm not that person. I'm more like Miranda in that scene in *Sex And The City* where she has to put the cake in the bin and then douse it with water so she won't eat more. I get the taste and I keep going. Not everyone's like this. I am.

If my comebacks fail, then there's always this (for your own personal comfort):

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

– Arthur Schopenhauer

Walk away from the fruit juice

You need to know this:

a glass of apple juice
(freshly squeezed or otherwise) = contains the same amount of
sugar (fructose) as a glass of coke = which is about
10-12 teaspoons.

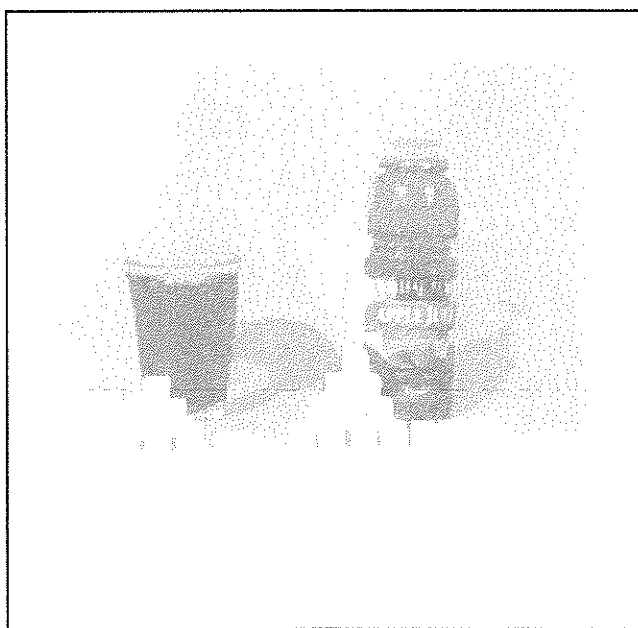


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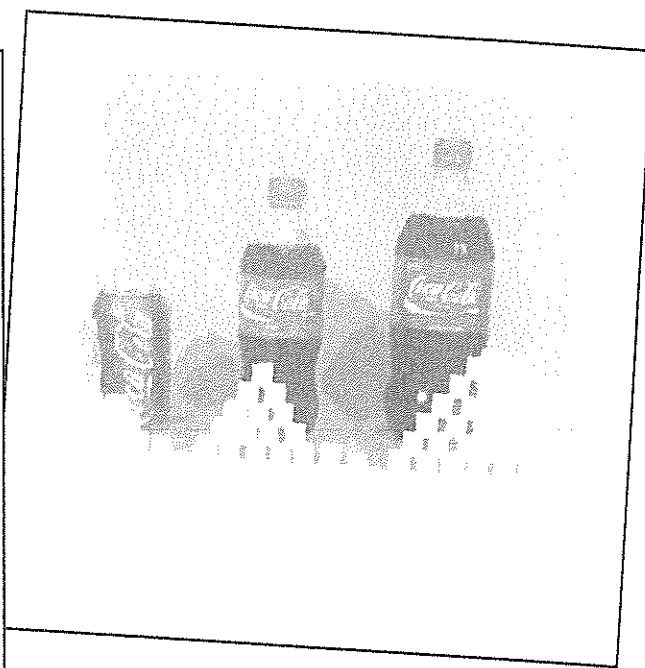


image sourced from sugarstacks.com

12 teaspoons?! Cripes, no!?! Hell, yes.

Worse: when sugar is in liquid form – soft drink or juice – the fructose and glucose hits the liver faster. The speed with which the liver has to do its work means the liver will convert much of the sugar in the drink to fat, inducing insulin resistance.



Do this:

Stick with things... you're almost halfway. And once fructose is out of your system, your body will start to tell you whether it wants to eat fruit... or is happy with vegetables instead... and how much. It will stop bingeing. Things will settle... gently.

Our bodies seek balance. And will find it if it's not interfered with.

As a preview of coming attractions: me, I started eating a bit of fruit after two months. I now eat some berries in my yoghurt. Or a kiwi fruit or a green apple. But some fruits – melons in particular – flare my gut right up. I react immediately. Mixing fruits does the same (most nutritionists advise against mixing fruits...fruit salad is trouble!).

9 Ways Sugar stuffs with your health

A not-so-cheery list, adapted from Nancy Appleton's *Lick the Sugar Habit*:

1. Throws off the body's homeostasis
2. Suppresses your immune system and impairs your defenses against infectious disease
3. Upsets the mineral relationships in your body, causing chromium and copper deficiencies and interferes with absorption of calcium and magnesium
4. Causes a rapid rise of adrenaline, hyperactivity, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and crankiness in children
5. Feeds cancer cells and has been connected with the development of cancer of the breast, ovaries, prostate, rectum, pancreas, lung, gallbladder and stomach
6. Causes an acidic digestive tract, indigestion and malabsorption
7. Elevates inflammation... which is closely linked to all kinds of auto-immune diseases as well as cancer
8. Leads to weight gain and abdominal obesity, or "beer belly"
9. Fructose metabolism is very similar to ethanol metabolism, which has a multitude of toxic effects, including NAFLD (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease). It's alcohol without the buzz.

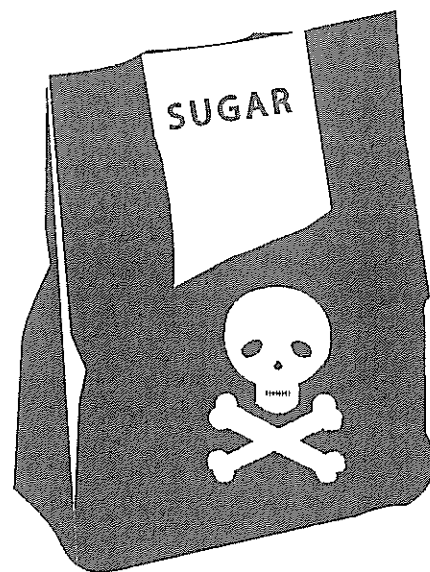
Sugar = poison?

The research is growing and clarifying to show sugar is also poisoning us. Studies are proving sugar to be the biggest cause of fatty liver, which leads to insulin resistance, which then causes metabolic syndrome, which is now being seen as the biggest precursor to heart disease and diabetes... and cancer.

As Taubes, author of "*Why We Get Fat*" wrote in *The New York Times* recently,

"Sugar scares me... I'd like to eat it in moderation. I'd certainly like my two sons to be able to eat it in moderation, to not over consume it, but I don't actually know what that means, and I've been reporting on this subject and studying it for more than a decade. If sugar just makes us fatter, that's one thing. We start gaining weight, we eat less of it. But we are also talking about things we can't see – fatty liver, insulin resistance and all that follows. Officially I'm not supposed to worry because the evidence isn't conclusive, but I do."

Me too.



Week 5

Get creative, experiment... and detox

*Oh dear... cravings. They're ugly.
And dispiriting. And they hurt.*

But know they're normal and keep going. Studies show it takes 21-28 days to change a habit. Another study says it takes 66 days, but that it doesn't matter if you lapse, so long as your intention is to continue. Each day we stay off sugar we're creating new habits in our cells, our hormones and in our brains. Like a muscle, the more we practice, the more this way of being becomes second nature.

If you lapse – say you sneak honey in your tea or pick at a friend's birthday cake – don't fret, don't give up. It's fine. Just keep your intention on track. Tomorrow is a new day.

Do this:

1. When in the clutches of a craving... simply tell yourself, "let's wait 20 minutes". Only 20 minutes. And then see if you still need a sweet fix. In the meantime make a cup of tea. Again, pause and take note of how the craving shifts.

This pausing and looking is important – it builds the "I can do this" muscle, making it easier next time.

2. Inject some alternative sweetness into your life. Often sugar is simply a treat. A punctuation point in the day, a reward for completing something challenging or a tool to get you through a difficult task. I know I used to reach for sugar when I had to finish an article on deadline... it made the task feel less harsh and took the edge off so I didn't resent doing it.

I've found it super important to develop other little splashes of niceness to sprinkle through my day once off sugar.

Here's some things that worked for me:

- In the late afternoon I burn sandalwood incense sticks or cinnamon bark oil. The woodiness and sweetness smells luxurious and special and – if I close my eyes – is almost as smooth and velvety as chocolate.
- I call someone sweet to talk to.
- I drink a lot of tea... when I feel the pull to head off to buy a \$3 sweet treat in the afternoon, instead I buy a new flavour of tea – green, chai, herbal and otherwise. I come back to my office and drink it. I've invested in a gorgeous pot, which makes the ritual all the more "treaty".
- I meditate. Or treat myself to 20 minutes outside in the sun.

How to make activated nuts

You can buy these in health food shops, but they're expensive. It's much cheaper to make your own in bulk. So here's how:

1. Soak a huge bag of nuts or seeds – almonds, pepitas, walnuts, pecans (just not the oily nuts like macadamias) – overnight in a pot of water with a tablespoon of rock salt.
2. Drain them in the morning.
3. Lay out on a baking tray (no oil, no paper) and "bake" in the oven at the lowest temperature possible (down to 65°C, for gas ovens, on the pilot light) for 12-24 hours.

Why soak 'n' roast? They taste much better and make for a very satisfying snack. PLUS they're full of enzymes – the soaking activates the enzymes contained in the nut, making them easier to digest and great for your metabolism overall.

The more enzymes you eat from food, the less of your own body's enzymes are required to break down food... which keeps you younger longer.



*** tip:** make a big batch and put in a sealed container in the freezer. It keeps them fresher, longer (and you don't need to defrost them, they're ready to eat straight from the bag).

Inside my shopping basket/handbag

I asked a bunch of my favourite nutritionists/health experts to share what they buy/make to curb their sugar cravings.

Michelle Bridger, celebrity trainer, The biggest loser:

In my shopping basket is mineral water and a bottle of Bickfords lime cordial. It's 9.4 per cent sugar and I only use a splash. For Michelle's best-selling books click [here](#), and for more information on her 12wbt program click [here](#).

Lee Holmes, author, Supercharged Food:

Kale chips! They're ready in 15 minutes. They give you so much instant energy and keep you going until dinner time. I always carry them around with me for an instant nutritional boost.

- 1 bunch kale
- 2 tbs nutritional yeast flakes
- sea salt
- extra virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius. Rinse and dry the leaves and place in a baking tray in a single layer, drizzle lightly with olive oil and sprinkle liberally with yeast flakes and sea salt. Bake for 15 minutes, or until crispy. When cool, break into bite-sized pieces. Can be stored in an airtight container for up to two weeks.

For more of Lee's recipes, and other sugar-free recipes visit [Supercharged Foods](#).

Zoe Bingley-Pellin, nutritionist and chef:

L-glutamine. Amino acid l-glutamine is renowned for its ability to curb sweet cravings.

Contact Zoe for more information on her [upcoming cooking classes](#).

Samantha Spawley, nutritionist and organic chef:

I make my own almond milk. It's delicious, cheap and best of all is not processed unlike the commercial varieties that are packed in aluminium-lined tetra packs, shelf stacked and 'long lived'!

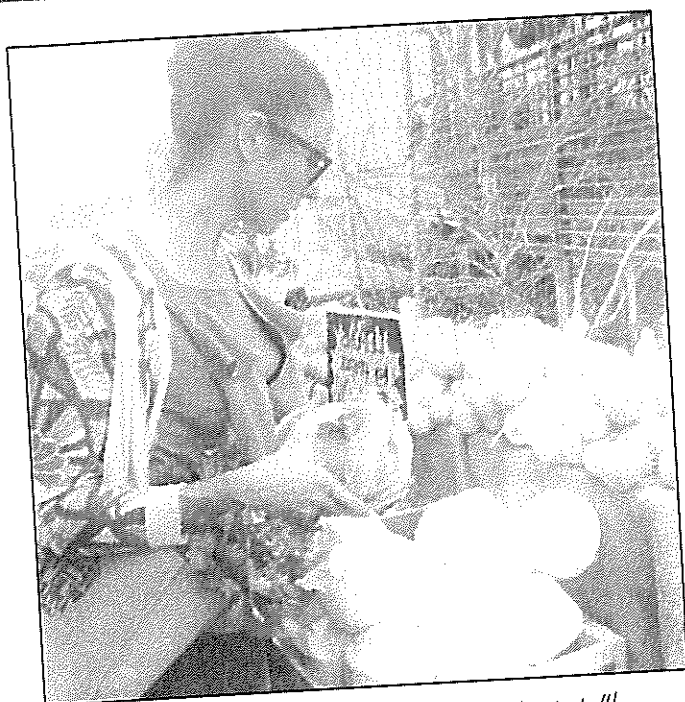
For a bigger batch use half a kilo of almonds to 2 litres of water.

- 1 cup almonds
- 3 cups water – more or less pending on how you like the texture
- A piece of really clean muslin or cheesecloth for the first straining
- A reusable fine wire mesh cone sieve (Chinoise) – good for the second strain
- Jug to store in the fridge

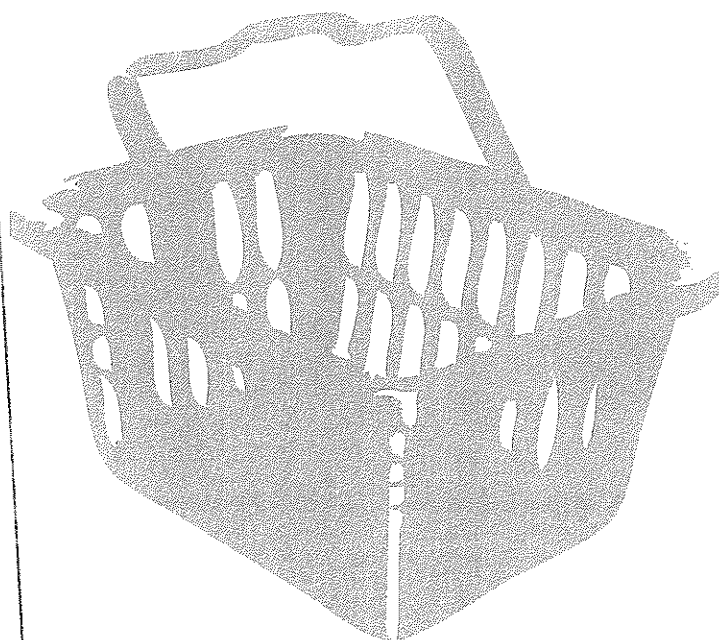
Soak the almonds overnight by putting them into a very large bowl or pot and adding enough water to cover as they will swell up. Next day, peel and discard skins as they will make the milk bitter. Place soaked peeled nuts in a blender with 3 cups of water – you may need to do this in batches.

Blend until thick and frothy and then strain through the muslin cloth into a large bowl, squeezing out the liquid as much as possible. You can strain again if need be until you have your desired consistency.

*** tip:** Reserve the pulp and use of for added protein to smoothies or shakes, lightly roast and use as a crumble topping or as "breadcrumbs".



those things above are young coconuts – no hard shell!



Your Detox Repair 101

Some of you, around about now, will feel like crap. You will be nauseous, dizzy, constipated, have aching kidneys and joints... you're withdrawing and detoxing. This is normal. Truly. And it's a good sign. Your body is ejecting toxins from your fat cells and they're swirling around your system on their way out. But they're definitely on their way out!

There are things you can do to feel better and speed things up:

1. Drink a stack of warm water (herbal tea is good) to flush things along
2. Get acupuncture. It can help with both cravings, withdrawal and toxin flushing
3. Visit a sauna; sweat things out
4. Take gut-care and bowel movement helpers. You might like to try slippery elm powder, chia seeds – both are quite mild and won't bog you up (I find psyllium husks, for instance, too boggy), but you will have to drink extra water to ensure they do their job well. I also take extra antioxidants and good gut bacteria supplements: Carla Oates Inner Beauty Powder, acidophilus tablets/powders, Vital Greens and chlorophyll. Not all at once! I alternate. For more of my stomach fixes, visit [here](#).
5. Try some herbal supplements. I asked naturopath **Angela Hywood** to recommend some easily accessible products that you can get from the chemist or health food shop. Her list is to the right.

Chromium. 200 mcg daily. The role of chromium in regulating insulin action is well known. A review concluded that chromium supplements can lower insulin resistance and reduce some of the metabolic disturbances associated with metabolic syndrome.

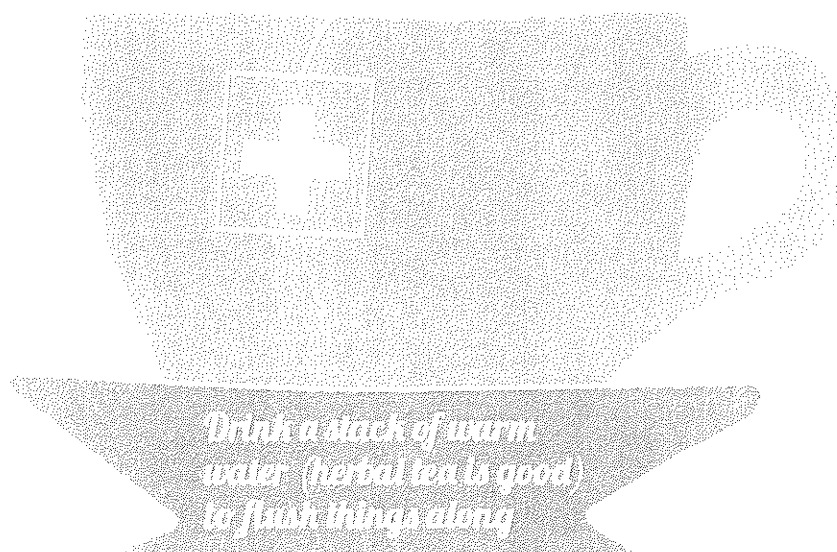
Calcium. 600mg & Magnesium. 400mg per day. Best taken in a formula together. Magnesium and calcium help combat adrenal stress and help curb sugar desire. Ca and Mg intake is protective against metabolic syndrome. A placebo-controlled clinical trial in type 2 diabetic patients found that Mg improved insulin sensitivity and metabolic controls.

Gymnema. 8-16 gram per day. A traditional Ayurvedic Indian herb, that powerfully curbs sugar cravings by balancing the pancreas release of insulin. Traditionally known in India as "Gurmar" meaning, "The Sugar Destroyer".

Green Tea. 2 cups per day. Green Tea reduces the GI of food intake (taken just before meals)

Cinnamon. 1 teaspoon per day. Helps better blood sugar control and stops sugar cravings. Easy to add to breakfast or a hot drink, such as chai tea.

Licorice root tea. 2-3 cups per day. Tastes sweet without containing sugar. Supports healthy strong adrenal glands and help combat stress. When stress is under control, you'll crave sugar less. Licorice feeds and nourishes your adrenal glands and is the perfect pick me up when feeling tired with a blood sugar low, as you are detoxing away from sugar.



Week 6

Adding some sweetness back in

David Gillespie suggested to me that it's best to go cold turkey for the first 2-3 months. You can then add in 1-2 pieces of fruit and dextrose after that. He argues that it's important to get the addiction to a sweet fix out of your system before you calmly choose to introduce it back again. I think this is a great idea - it certainly worked for me.

But I think you need to suss the best time for this for yourself. By now your body will be able to tell you – calmly, honestly – what's best for it. Me, I was ready around week 6.



Around your sixth week, you might feel it's time to play with sweetness again. Just to see.

Some suggestions:

- Low-fructose fruit – kiwi fruit, blueberries and raspberries are the best options. Mandarins, plums, strawberries and oranges are pretty good, too. Grapes and pineapple and bananas... I'd do these in moderation because they're high in fructose and low in fibre.
- Dextrose (David Gillespie's *The Sweet Poison Quit Plan* explains the deal with dextrose and includes some great recipes).
- Stevia. I've come to like this stuff – a natural sweetener that contains no fructose – and I'm noticing it being used more and more in products available commercially. You can buy it as granules or in liquid form (be sure to read the label...the liquid is more potent than regular sugar).

Some sweeeeeeeet drinks

The following are totally sugar-free and can be drunk from week 1, really.

- Licorice root tea. A teaspoon in a pot on it's own, or with some cinnamon nibs and ginger. Even try chewing on straight-up root, instead of chewing gum!
- Chai tea. But I've already mentioned that!

- Milk. After quitting sugar you'll find it tastes so sweet. Try it with a tiny sprinkle of coffee granules.
- Coconut water.
- *Miessence Berry Radical*. Made of raw cacao, raw coffee fruit, pomegranate, strawberry, blueberry, acai and goji powders. All organic. One heaped teaspoon contains nine potent antioxidant-rich superfoods. I swear it tastes just as sweet as hot chocolate. I add a dash of hot milk. This stuff was seriously my saviour while I quit.
- Experiment with different herbal teas – many are surprisingly sweet and are also great for detoxing as you do your sugar quitting. Look for roasted dandelion root (tastes like coffee/chocolate), licorice, cinnamon, chilli and maca in the ingredients list. I love Yogi Tea's Sweet Chilli bags and Maharishi Ayurvedic vata tea – with licorice, ginger, cardamon, and cinnamon.

*The deal with soy?
Well, it contains added
sugar. Check the label -
some contain more than
2 tsp of sugar per glass.*

9 Moments in Coconut Love

Coconuts really are going to become your friend. In all its forms: flakes, shavings, oil, cream and milk. And, of course, fresh. Major supermarkets and fresh produce markets now stock virgin (young/green) coconuts (they have a white casing, not the brown hard shell of a mature coconut). They cost about \$2-\$3 and require a machete/cleaver to open. For opening instructions [click here](#). There are also several devices you can buy online, designed to open coconuts with ease. Drink the juice and scrape the flesh out with a spoon and use in smoothies and recipes.

Here's some coconut ideas to get you started:

1. **Drink coconut water/juice as a snack.** It's three times more hydrating than water, is fat and sugar-free and is an amazing electrolyte. Go fresh. Or there are also some great packaged ones around. I like Coconut water... it's now stocked in a lot of cafes (just don't go for the flavoured ones... they contain sugar).
2. **A "fool"-ish dessert:** add the soft flesh to some mashed, stewed pear and serve with VERY good cream.
3. **Add coconut oil to smoothies.** About a teaspoon.
4. **Toast coconut flakes** lightly in a pan and sprinkle on porridge or yoghurt with some walnuts and cinnamon.
5. **Play about with smoothies.** Replace milk with coconut water. And add coconut flesh in, too. Or try this recipe from *Origin of Energy*.

Chocolate Coconut Smoothie

1 virgin coconut
2 eggs
2½ tsp raw cacao
2½ tsp coconut oil
Stevia 1/8 tsp

Blend all ingredients using a blender or stab mixer. Feel free to leave out the eggs and perhaps add a whey powder or some chia seeds. Always put the coconut oil in just before you blend so it doesn't turn solid in the cold milk. During the winter months you may have to melt it on a gentle heat before you put it in.

6. Make a coconut "granola"

4-5 tbs butter or coconut oil
3 cups coconut flakes
1 cup chopped or ground almonds
(preferably activated ones)
2-4 tbs stevia
1 cup crispy cashews and pecans or walnuts

Mix all ingredients in a bowl, spread evenly on baking paper on a tray and bake in preheated oven at 120°C. When golden, pull out and cool immediately to get it crispy.

7. Coconut ice cream!

Simply put a can of coconut cream (not milk, and not a "lite" version) in the fridge – this thickens it to a soft icecream consistency.

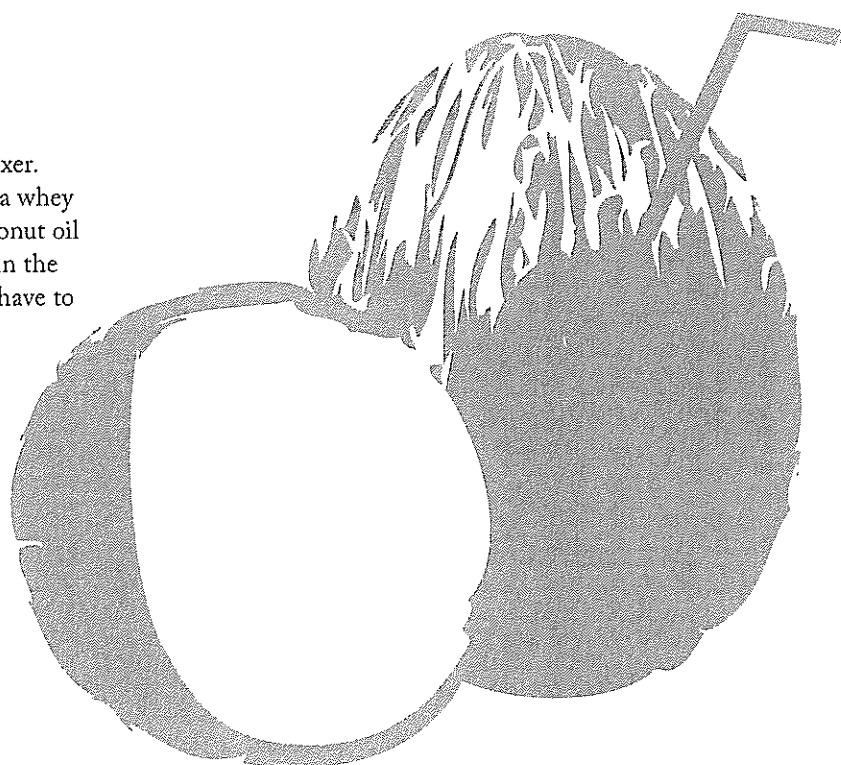
8. Stew a pear in coconut milk

or pour some over strawberries for insta-dessert.

9. Make rice porridge with coconut milk.

Simply heat leftover brown rice (or quinoa, or you can use oats) with a good splash of the milk – creamy and sweet! Add cinnamon and nuts.

Beware: Thai food uses a lot of coconut milk (great)... AND a hell of lot of palm sugar, too (grim).



So. What about other sweeteners – the fakes, the alternatives?

Everyone likes to whack on a “no added sugar” label. Health food shops are some of the worse for this. But read labels carefully. Agave, maple syrup, honey, fruit juice extract, molasses, corn syrup... they’re all fructose.

But there is light. Here are some “sugars” you might want to play with:

- ✓ Dextrose is basically sugar without fructose. It’s the only “sugar” David Gillespie recommends. It’s 100% glucose. It can be bought as a powder.
- ✓ Rice syrup. It’s a natural sweetener, made from fermented cooked rice. You can find it in health food stores, and some supermarkets. But make sure the ingredients panel lists only rice (and water). Some versions add extra (fructose-containing) sugars.
- ✓ Glucose syrup (or maltodextrin or maltodextrose, not to be confused with maltitol) The same deal as dextrose. You can find it in the cooking sections of the supermarket.
- ✓ Stevia is a natural alternative, derived from a leaf and contains no fructose. Most researchers deem it safe, but

still don’t really know what the human body does with the steviol once ingested. I’m personally cooking with it... but to be honest, I don’t have a major need for the sweetness, and since it’s not addictive, I’m not turning to it like I did with sugar.

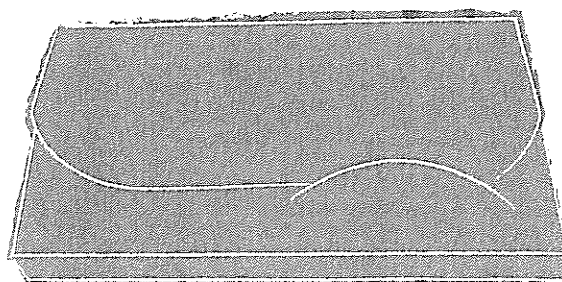
- ✓ Xylitol is extracted from birch cellulose and is a rare sugar alcohol that does not spike blood sugar levels. It also has anti-bacterial properties, which is why it’s used in chewing gum. Our livers eventually convert xylitol to glucose, so it’s generally deemed the only safe sugar alcohol (all others are to be avoided, particularly maltitol, which is used in a lot of sugar-free chocolates and has been directly linked to the formation of cancer tumors.)
- ¿ Sucralose (Splenda) is chlorinated sugar. There are conflicting reports as to its safety, and many say it’s bad on the gut, but because you only have to use a tiny amount (it’s hundreds of times sweeter than sugar) it’s often deemed relatively harmless. Me, I’m a little skeptical, as are many nutritionists on this one.

Surely sugar-free chewing gum is alright?

Well, instead of sugar, sugar-free gum contains high intensity sweeteners (like Ace K, aspartame, alitame, and sucralose) and a range of sugar alcohols (like sorbitol, isomalt, mannitol). These sugar alcohols are part alcohol, part sugar. What you really need to know about them though, is that our bodies can’t ingest more than a half to two thirds of a sugar alcohol. Where does it go, then? Into our bloodstream and feeds the bacteria in our large intestine. Ergo, charmingly, diarrhoea and gas. Which is why so many of these products warn of a ‘laxative effect’. In my world, chewy is wrongtown.

According to FYI Living:

“Research has shown that artificial sweeteners might contribute to weight gain ... [when the] sweet taste is not accompanied by the calories (energy) our brain expects it to be, the complex systems our bodies have to regulate energy balance may be thrown off kilter. The result is that a diet high in artificial sweeteners may possibly, over time, cause people to seek out more calories from other sources”.



Chocolate... oh, chocolate!

The most common question I get asked: is there a “safe” sugar-free chocolate out there (that’s edible).
The short answer: there’s one.

* David Gillespie alerted me to this: *Frusano* chocolate available from Germany.

If you don’t have a friend in Germany:

* I’ve found sugar-free carob buds stocked in many health food shops. They are surprisingly sweet. Not the same. But close.

* Raw cacao nibs. A small handful hits amazing spots.

* Again, Miessence Berry Radical powder. A teaspoon in hot water: hot chocolate indulgence.

* There are a number of sugar-free chocolate recipes on the internet that use coconut oil for sweetness.
Try this one.

* For the brave, there’s this **99% cacao version** sold in specialty chocolate shops.

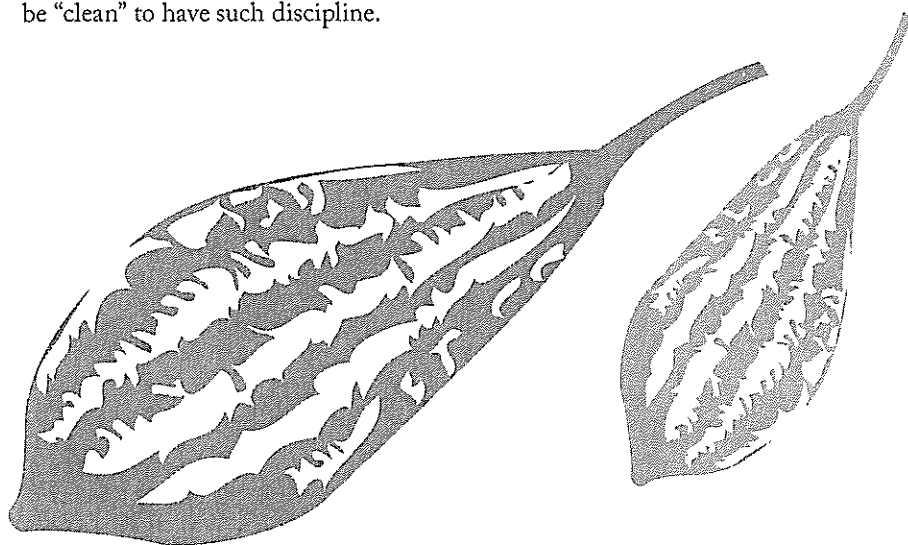
* In my world, the 85% cocoa varieties are also OK once you’ve been off sugar a few months. You’ll need to limit yourself to just a few squares...and you’ll need to be “clean” to have such discipline.

Beware:

* Sure, 70% cocoa dark chocolate IS better than milk chocolate, but it still contains almost 30% sugar. Don’t kid yourself!

* Some “sugar-free” chocolate, such as Loving Earth, contains agave, which is up to 90% fructose. Just so you know.

* Some, such as Cocoa Farm, are sweetened with maltitol, which is one of the common sugar alcohols.



...oh. chocolate!

Some sweet recipes

My Avocado and Chocolate Mousse

2 ripe avocados
1-2 tsp stevia powder or 2 of rice syrup
1 tsp of vanilla extract or a sprinkle of vanilla powder
½ tsp of cinnamon
1 tbs of chia seeds
¼ - ½ cup of organic raw cacao powder
a pinch of celtic sea salt
½ cup coconut cream (stored in fridge to firm)

Use a stab mixer (or blender) and whizz the lot. Scoop the mousse into a small serving container, like small antique teacups (I use chinese teacups) and put in the fridge. I kind of experiment with this recipe; you might not like as much cacao. The chia seeds make it nice and thick and give it a texture like choc chops.

Serves 4-6 (it's super rich)

Sweet Potato Truffles

1 medium sweet potato, baked and then remove the peel
3 tbs coconut oil
2 tbs coconut cream, (kept in fridge)
1 tbs coconut flour
1 tsp stevia powder or 1-2 tsp of rice syrup
pinch salt

Mash sweet potato, add the rest and stir to combine well. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour.

To shape, scoop out teaspoon sized portions, and roll into a ball. Roll in coconut (toasted if you like).

Makes about 16

Dextrose Chocolate Mousse

from David Gillespie's collection

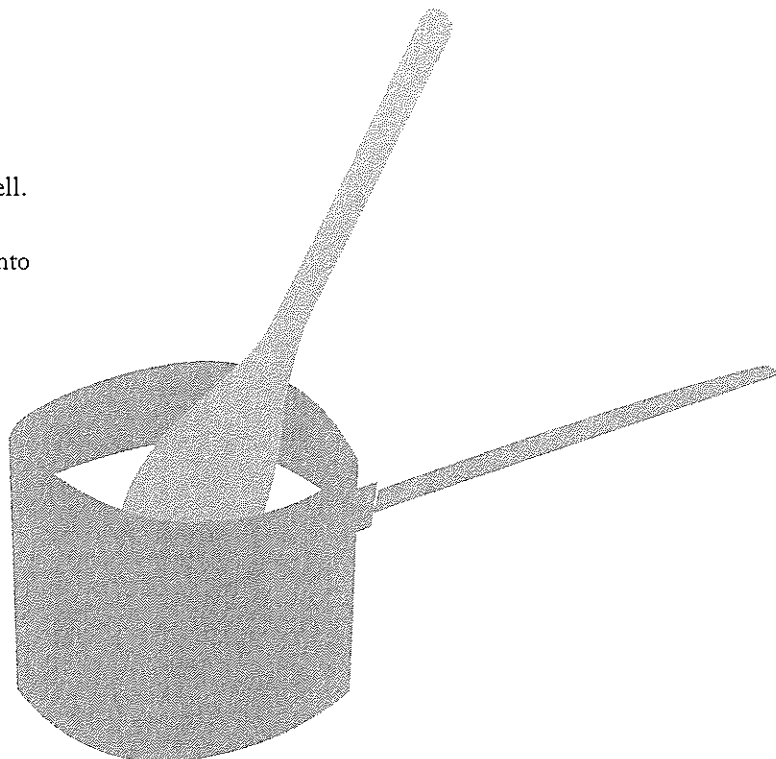
1 tsp unflavoured gelatin
1 tbs cold water
2 tbs boiling water
½ cup dextrose
¼ cup cocoa
1 cup cold whipping cream
1 tsp vanilla essence

Sprinkle gelatin over cold water allowing to soften (approx 1 min). Add boiling water and stir until dissolved completely. Cool slightly.

Stir together sugar and cocoa- add whipping cream and vanilla. Beat on medium speed, scraping bottom of the bowl occasionally until mixture is stiff. Pour in gelatine mixture beat until blended. Spoon into serving dishes.

Refrigerate for 30 minutes (We found this was the tiniest bit gritty after only 30 minutes in the fridge. But by the next day, the grittiness has disappeared.)

Makes about 20 biscuits



Lemon Shortbread with Natvia

150g unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
1 tbs Natvia (Stevia)
2 tsp vanilla bean paste or good quality vanilla extract
1 ¼ cups (195g) plain flour
1 tsp finely grated lemon rind
2-3 tsp lemon juice

Preheat the oven to a slow 150°C (130°C fan forced) and line a large tray with baking paper. Extract the vanilla bean paste by slicing the vanilla bean lengthways. Gently scrape your knife along the inside of the bean. Using an electric mixer, cream the softened butter with the Natvia and vanilla paste for 8 minutes on high speed or until very pale and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl regularly. Reduce to speed to low and add the lemon rind, flour and enough lemon juice to form a soft dough, mixing very lightly. Knead lightly with your hands until soft and pliable. Do not over work.

Press into a ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. Roll out the cooled mix between sheets of baking paper to a large square. Refrigerate for a further 10 minutes if dough is not firm.

Cut into small squares or desired shape with a floured cutter and gently transfer to your prepared baking trays. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until firm. Allow trays and shortbread to cool completely before moving as shortbread is naturally very delicate. Do not over mix or over work the dough or it will toughen quickly. It's a good idea to keep your hands cool when kneading. Before you start, run your wrists under cold water.

Resting the dough before rolling is essential to help stop it toughening up and shrinking.

If the dough is sticky or hard to handle, you can refrigerate after cutting (before baking). These delicious shortbreads will keep well for 2 days in a sealed container.

Quick Baked Zucchini Cake

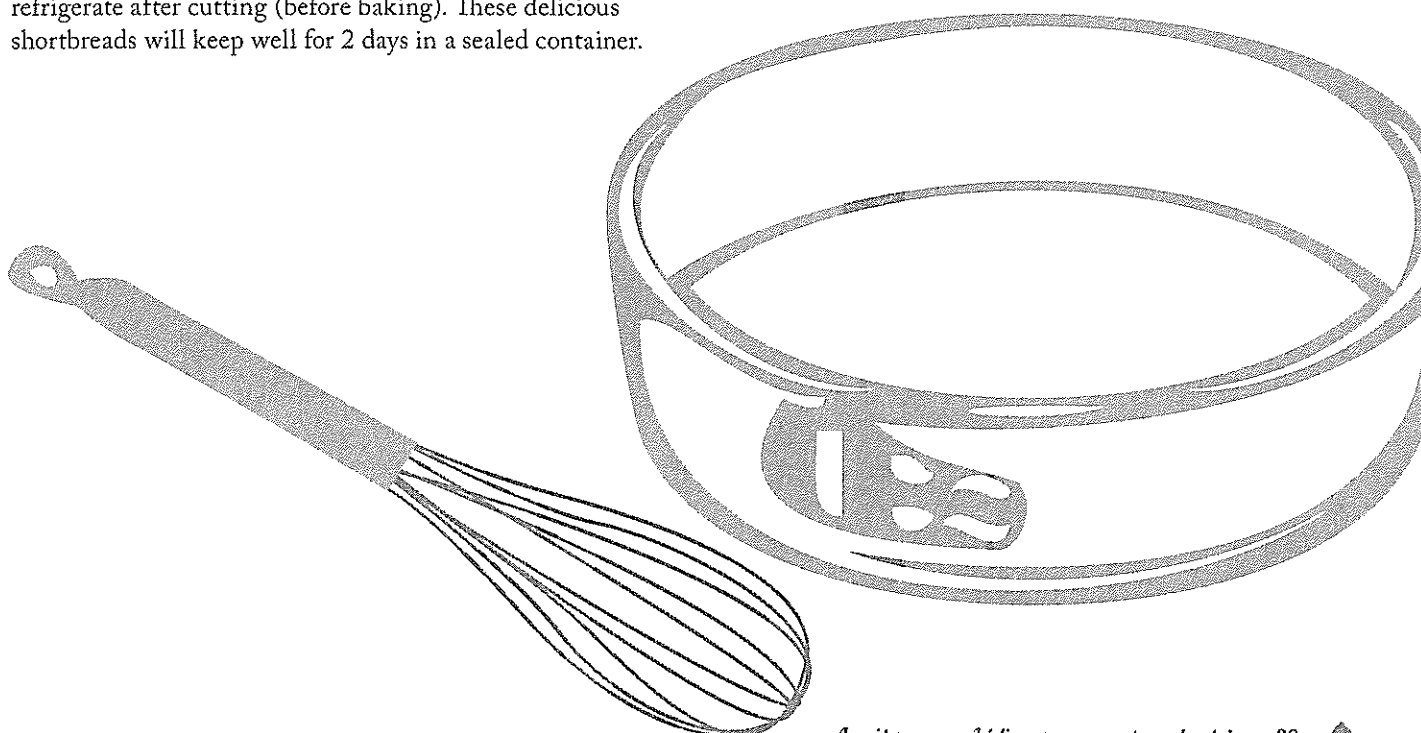
from Lee at Supercharged Foods

1 ½ cups almond flour, or gluten free flour of your choice
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
¼ tsp sea salt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp grated nutmeg
¾ tsp stevia powder
2 eggs, beaten
3 tbs grapeseed oil
4 tbs coconut milk
1 ½ cups (200g) grated zucchini

Preheat the oven to 170°C and grease an 18 cm round cake tin. In a bowl place the almond flour, walnuts, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and stevia, and stir to combine. In a separate bowl put the eggs, grapeseed oil and coconut milk and whisk together. Add to the dry ingredients and fold through.

Squeeze the excess water out of the zucchinis (using your hands is best) then add them to the bowl. Fold in lightly. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 45 minutes, or until the cake springs back when pressed in the centre. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool.

Makes 1 cake



Week 7

Recovering from lapses

Around about now, things become a little easier. I've found most people are over the detox period, and the withdrawal, and are in the swing.

Around about now, though, it can get tempting to slip, get relaxed... be a little TOO proud of oneself. And so you lapse.

So, you have to be careful. That said...

I've lapsed. Several times.

Each time I've been aware of it and – here's the thing – allowed it. Which has enabled me to remain mature about whether I actually enjoyed sugar at all.

Fact: *Studies have shown that when people acknowledge and forgive themselves for a bad food choice they're better able to resist next time.*

Also, lapses have served as great reminders of why I quit.

When I have sugar I can witness how my body just isn't sated by sugar...and wants MORE. It's a little scary. And so I have to move forward with a bit of care.



Do this

- * If you revert briefly, pause and take note. How do you find the smell? Did the taste do anything for you? Can you feel yourself wanting to reach for more? How did you feel afterwards? Each time I was amazed how much I was repulsed by the taste... it seemed so acidic and cloying. And my tongue felt burnt?!
- * The next day after you've lapsed, just ensure you don't touch any sugar or stimulants. It only takes half a day to feel back on track again. Back off from fruit, tea, coffee, etc.
- * Don't punish yourself. When we get harsh, we tend to swing right back into the crave-reward cycle that fuels sugar addiction.

To be honest with you, I actually recommend, after being sugar-free for a good two month, testing yourself in this way.

Have a TimTam. See if it floats or rocks any boats for you. It's been one of the most liberating things for me – to see how measured and grounded I can be with it. Only a few short months ago sugar controlled me. Now I can witness what it does to my body with curiosity. And decide to leave it alone.

This is freedom.

- * Pause and smile to yourself. You're becoming cool about sugar. Slowly, slowly.

*If you revert briefly,
pause and take note.*

Nancy Appleton's top tips on getting over sugar addiction

Dr Nancy Appleton started writing and lecturing about health in the late 1970s as a reaction to her own poor health. Nancy is the author of *Lick the Sugar Habit*, and her most recent book *Suicide by Sugar*. I asked her to share her personal tricks:

1. Remove all sugary food from your home. If you need to have that "fix," you have to drive to the store to feed your habit. Buy as little as possible, eat as little as possible and throw the rest away. Do not take it home.
2. Keep your blood sugar level. If you should go into a hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) state, you might experience headaches, fatigue, shakes, dizziness, anger and/or perspiration. You might think that eating sugar will bring your blood sugar levels back to normal, it will but only momentarily. Eat wholewheat crackers, baked potato chips, small handful of nuts or a piece of fruit. These foods will take your blood sugar level a little longer to stabilize but you will not yo-yo up and down.
3. Exercise. Exercising shuts down the appetat – the mechanism in the brain that controls appetite. Following a vigorous exercise, most people are not hungry, so you will be burning calories and you will decrease your appetite.
4. Avoid artificial sweeteners. In a number of laboratory tests, rats were given saccharin. Their bodies were fooled into thinking the sweetener was sugar, and they produced a boost of insulin. This is not healthy. **Also, artificial sweeteners keeps the body craving more sweet substances.**
5. Brush your teeth. **Most toothpastes contain a small amount of sweetener**, it will give you the taste. Then drink a glass of water to fool your stomach. The best part of this is that you will be consciously rejecting the sugar by spitting it out.
6. Use fruit-flavored lipgloss. You can lick all day. I like this Moogoo one: *Edible Tingling Honey Lip Balm*, made with cocoa butter and coconut oil.

The Deal with High Fructose Corn Syrup:

Is HFCS worse or better than sugar?

The short answer – it's on par with sugar in terms of fructose content (about 55%). However (long answer) – in the 1980s, the US Government subsidized corn producers and so HFCS flooded the market. It's since been stamped with the "evil" stamp, with sugar promoted as more healthful. Really? It's same-same-but-different.

Be alert, not alarmed #1 labels

I don't like to be alarmist, but if you're planning to stay off sugar for longer, you'll need to be alive to a lot of the hidden sugars about. I've left this information to Week 7 because it's a lot to take in and you kinda need an understanding of the logic of the sugar cycle – as well as

experience of the benefits of being sugar-free – to wade through it. My best advice right now: take time to pause in the supermarket aisle and read labels.

Make smart choices by comparing sugar content. For example:

*Balsamic on
your salad
or apple cider
vinegar?*

| NUTRITION INFORMATION | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| SERVINGS PER PACKAGE 33.3 | | | | |
| SERVING SIZE 15 ml | | | | |
| | Average Quantity per serving | | Average Quantity per 100 ml | |
| Energy | 49 kJ | | 328 kJ | |
| | 11.7 Cal | | 77.8 Cal | |
| Protein | 0.05 g | | 0.3 g | |
| Fat, total | 0.0 g | | 0.0 g | |
| - saturated | 0.0 g | | 0.0 g | |
| Carbohydrate | 2.4 g | | 15.7 g | |
| - sugars | 2.4 g | | 15.7 g | |
| Sodium | 1.6 mg | | 10.8 mg | |

balsamic vinegar

| Valori nutrizionali medi per 100 ml | | Porzione Serving size | |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| Nutritional value | | 15 ml | |
| Serving per container 50 | | | |
| valore energetico - kcal | 5 | 1 | |
| energy value - kJ | 22 | 3 | |
| proteins - protein | 0.0 g | 0.0 g | |
| carbohydrate | 1.29 g | 0.19 g | |
| total - total fats | 0.0 g | 0.00 g | |

apple cider

or

*Would you
go sweet
chilli sauce
or tamari on
your stirfry?*

| NUTRITION INFORMATION | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| SERVINGS PER PACKAGE: 12 | | | |
| SERVING SIZE: 20ml | | | |
| | AVERAGE QUANTITY PER SERVING | AVERAGE QUANTITY PER 100ml | |
| ENERGY | 167kJ (40 Cal) | 836kJ (200 Cal) | |
| PROTEIN | LESS THAN 1g | LESS THAN 1g | |
| FAT, TOTAL | LESS THAN 1g | LESS THAN 1g | |
| - SATURATED | LESS THAN 1g | LESS THAN 1g | |
| CARBOHYDRATE, TOTAL | 9.4g | 47.0g | |
| - SUGARS | 8.4g | 42.2g | |
| SODIUM | 217mg | 1085mg | |

sweet chilli sauce

| NUTRITION INFORMATION | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Serving per package: 75 | | |
| Serving size: 10ml | | |
| | Avg Quantity per Serving | Avg Quantity per 100ml |
| Energy | 33kJ (8Cal) | 327kJ (78Cal) |
| Protein | 1.1g | 10.6g |
| Fat, total | Less than 0.1g | 0.7g |
| - saturated | Less than 0.1g | Less than 0.1g |
| Carbohydrate | Less than 1.0g | 8.0g |
| - sugars | Less than 0.1g | Less than 0.1g |
| Sodium | 41.0mg | 410.0mg |

tamari

or

*Burger time:
barbeque
sauce or
mustard?*

| NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| SERVINGS PER PKG 92 | | | |
| SERVING SIZE 10 mL | | | |
| | AVG QTY PER SERV | AVG QTY PER 100 mL | |
| ENERGY | 107 kJ | 1074 kJ | |
| PROTEIN | 0.1 g | 0.6 g | |
| FAT - Total | <0.1 g | 0.1 g | |
| - Saturated | NIL | NIL | |
| CARBOHYDRATES | | | |
| - Total | 6.2 g | 62.4 g | |
| - Sugars | 5.4 g | 53.9 g | |
| SODIUM | 105 mg | 1057 mg | |

bbq sauce

| NUTRITION INFORMATION | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Serving per package: 75 | | |
| Serving size: 6g | | |
| | Avg. Quantity per Serving | Avg. Quantity per 100g |
| Energy | 22kJ | 425kJ |
| protein | 0.2g | 4.2g |
| fat, total | 0.2g | 3.9g |
| - saturated | <0.1g | <1g |
| carbohydrate | 0.2g | 4.0g |
| - sugars | <0.1g | <1g |
| sodium | 55mg | 1057mg |

mustard

Be alert, not alarmed #2: eating out

- * When eating out: look out for “honey-roasted” and “caramelised” and “balsamic reduction” on menus... and avoid!
- * Avoid Thai – they drench their stuff in palm sugar. I learned this the hard way. I forced myself to eat a stir-fry, aware it was full of sugar, but sort of stuck... and vomited that night.
- * Greek cuisine is great, so is pub fare – steak and chips and veggies. Or fish of the day.
- * Be wary of tapas and “bitsy” food... they often get slathered in more sauces than a straight-up main course dish.
- * At delis, build your own sandwich rather than grab the pre-made kind. That way you can ask for mustard instead of other sauces etc.
- * Similarly, at buffets, opt for dishes with the least amount of ingredients, particularly sauces. So go for the roast dinner, rather than the pasta with the rich tomato sauce.
- * Ditto, choose steamed veggies over salad as a side (they often come drenched in balsamic or, worse, Thousand Island dressing gunk-age).
- * Salt-free products often contain less sugar (which is added to salted products, ironically, to counteract the salt).
- * Look out for chai tea that comes with palm sugar or honey already added!
- * Drain tinned corn and beans – the liquid is full of sugar.
- * Reduced-fat sauces and spreads can contain double the amount of sugar. Or, in the case of mayonnaise, ten times as much!



nutrition information

| | QUANTITY PER SERVING | PER 100g |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------|
| ENERGY | 1000kJ | 1000kJ |
| TOTAL FAT | 100g | 100g |
| SATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| MONOSATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| POLYUNSATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| SUGAR | 10g | 10g |
| SALT | 10g | 10g |

whole egg mayo

or

nutrition information

| | QUANTITY PER SERVING | PER 100g |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------|
| ENERGY | 1000kJ | 1000kJ |
| TOTAL FAT | 100g | 100g |
| SATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| MONOSATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| POLYUNSATURATED FAT | 10g | 10g |
| SUGAR | 10g | 10g |
| SALT | 10g | 10g |

fat free mayo

Be alert, not alarmed #3: The low-fat Dairy Doodle

When fat is removed from a foodstuff, particularly from dairy, it's often replaced with sugar to make up for flavour lost. Thus, did you know a small tub of "diet" yoghurt contains about 6 teaspoons of sugar? Even the ones that say "no added sugar" ("fruit juice concentrate" apparently doesn't count)? Natural, full-fat yoghurt is about 4.7g/100g sugar. But the sugar is lactose, which is fructose-free. Anything over 4.7g/100g is added sugar.

As I mentioned, we're designed to metabolise fat (and carbs and protein) and to be satiated by it; we have a hormone that registers fat in our bodies and tells the brain to stop eating. We're not designed to metabolise fructose (table sugar is half fructose). Our bodies don't detect it when we eat it, so we have to eat a stack of it to feel full. Which we do. Which is why apple juice can be more fattening than milk – we have to drink more of it to hit the "I'm full" point. Plus, unlike fat, fructose turns directly to fat in our systems. For a demonstration of this, see my interview with David Gillespie [here](#).



I'm smiling because I'm holding a plate of haloumi

Low Fat Fruit Yogurt

Nutrition Information

| | Average Quantity per Serve | Average Quantity per 100g |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Servings per package: 3.2 | | |
| Serving size: 170g | | |
| Energy | 697 kJ (167 cal) | 410 kJ (98 Cal) |
| Protein - total | 9.1 g | 5.3 g |
| fat - total | 0 mg | 0 mg |
| - saturated | 2.7 g | 1.6 g |
| Carbohydrate - total | 1.7 g | 1.0 g |
| - sugars | 26.2 g | 15.7 g |
| Sodium | 75.7 mg | 44.5 mg |
| Calcium | 295 mg (37% RDI*) | 173 mg |

low fat yoghurt

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

| | PER SERVE | PER 100g |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| SERVING SIZE 100g, SERVES PER PACKAGE 5 | | |
| ENERGY | 400kJ | 400kJ |
| PROTEIN | 5.2g | 5.2g |
| FAT - Total | 5.5g | 5.5g |
| - Saturated | 4.0g | 4.0g |
| CARBOHYDRATE - Total | 5.7g | 5.7g |
| - Sugars | 3.5g | 1.5g |
| CALCIUM | 180mg | 180mg |
| SODIUM | 50mg | 50mg |

* Subject to seasonal variation

* CM Price

natural yoghurt

Refining + moving forward...

Woot woot! You've made it. You've broken the cycle. After almost 60 days of repeatedly saying no to sugar, you've built new neural pathways in your noggin, and allowed your body to recalibrate.

So. Now what?

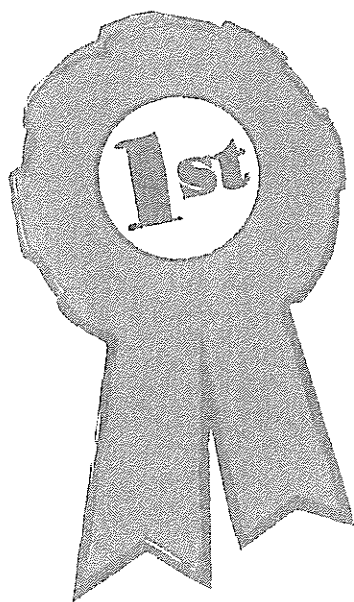
When I got to the two-month mark I remember someone asked me if I missed sugar. Their question was tinged with pity. I answered: "Gosh, I hadn't really thought about it." And this is the sublime point of doing this whole crazy experiment.

Soon enough, you wake up and realize sugar is simply not an issue.

When I set out I wanted to feel clean and clear. But mostly I wanted to be free of sugar. Free of it's grip. I wanted to be able to decide how much sugar I wanted. In the process, sugar just lost its appeal. Naturally. As a wonderful consequence.

There's an assumption – and I certainly started out this way – that living sugar-free would remain a battle forever. It just isn't. The enemy just leaves the battlefield.

I went sugar-free. And I became freed of sugar.



OK, so where am I now?

It took me eight weeks to get off sugar properly. This is because I followed the steps I outline here in this e-book – I reduced my intake beforehand, I replaced sugar with fat, and I didn't stay too rigid. I ensured my body wasn't left deprived of energy. In fact, I overdid the energy replacements and felt better than I've ever felt, even while going through withdrawal. I was no longer hungry, for the first time in as long as I can remember.

- * I lost about 2kg... not much, but visibly I looked less puffy and I feel like I'm the right weight for my age and height and food quantity choices
- * I now have a flat stomach – no more bloating or fluid retention. Seriously. I just don't get it anymore
- * I have a clear head and rarely get slumps
- * I get full from a meal... happily full.
- * I don't get "sugar hangovers"... I realize that many of my hangovers after a big dinner were actually from sugar

I've been sugar-free for eight months (and counting). However, I'm not militant about being sugar-free. If a burger comes with tomato sauce on top, I let it be. If I realize the curry I'm eating is sweetened I don't freak out. I eat beetroots and carrots (which contain a high percentage of sugar) – some sugar quitters don't! As I say above, I lapse, too. But only a little. Because I'm able to correct myself easily now. It's not really lapsing. I'm just continuing the experiment.

How much sugar do I eat now?

I'm not sure exactly. As I say, I'm not militant. I'm not counting out the teaspoons. I just limit it as much as I can and avoid the really full-on culprits (dried fruit, juice, sauces etc...all things I'm happy to live without now I know they're not benign).

- * I try to keep to the "less than 3-6g/100g rule. Wherever possible.
- * I eat 1-2 pieces of fruit a day. Mostly berries, kiwi fruit and pears.
- * I slip in some 85% chocolate every now and then, and the occasional "health food treat" (see below)

As I said from the outset, I was simply curious. I started the experiment and kept going. While ever I feel good, I'll continue to keep going.

I *could* go back to eating sugar. But I don't want to.

To all the naysayers out there who freak out about the extremeness of going sugar-free, I say, chill. You see, since I'm no longer addicted I'm able to choose to allow a little into my diet. A little doesn't send me over the edge these days. A little doesn't prevent me from being able to correct. And, the best thing of all, a little is all I feel like.

I'm aware of, and alive to, sugar. So I know where the sugar traps are and I can avoid them.

It's all terribly chilled and grown-up. And this is precisely where I wanted to get to.

Do this:

** Keep testing and being curious.*

I can't tell you what level of sugar-freeness you need to adhere to. Some sugar-quitters can't touch the stuff at all. Some days I know I have to be careful ...I can sense I'm feeling "needy". We all need to work out the best level to operate at – kindly, gently, allowing for lapses and corrections.

** Please don't become an anti-sugar bore.*

I had to be conscious of this. There's nothing worse than a reformed smoker/drinker/sugar addict ramming their message down others' throats.

Far better to simply "be your message".

** Go easy on the fat now.*

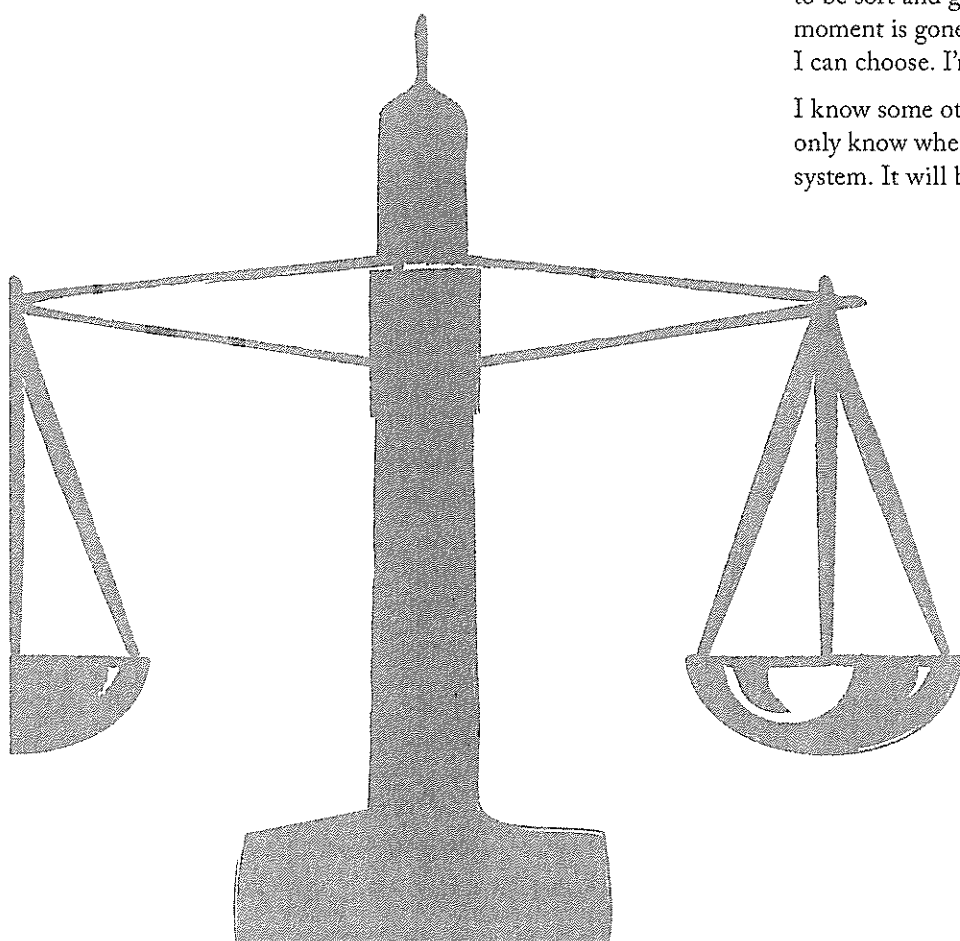
I kind of got excited about the fat thing for a while...and had to pull back a little. This plan isn't a license to pig out!

One interesting thing: I find I lapse not when I'm around fully sugared foods, but when I'm exposed to "sort of healthy" foods. Like, dark chocolate strawberries, or a gluten-free muffin sweetened with organic maple syrup. This is because the issue becomes one of degree.

I've had to become aware of this.

Again, to be honest, if I find myself eating these "healthy" sugared foods occasionally, I just go with it. It's better to be soft and gentle. And reflect and correct once the moment is gone. For me it's not a big deal. I can correct. I can choose. I'm not locked in. I'm not denying myself.

I know some other sugar-free converts can't. You will only know where you're at once you have sugar out of your system. It will be screamingly obvious.



16 Breakfast Ideas

This is the hardest meal of the day to cater for... mostly because "breakfast foods" are laden in sugar.

David Gillespie: *"Eating a heart foundation approved cereal (like Kellogg's Just Right) and a glass of apple juice for breakfast will add up to almost half a kilo of sugar by the end of the week."*

But no one ever said you HAVE to have cereal or fruit for breakfast!

Get imaginative. Finding new breakfast ideas has become a game for me. The trick is to include healthy fats and protein in each meal. Here's some ideas to get you started.

At home try:

1. Millet toast with cashew spread.
2. Avocado and vegemite on toast (not Promite or Marmite, they contain a lot of sugar).
3. Porridge "sweetened" with a little coconut milk and cinnamon, or with yoghurt and nuts.
4. David Gillespie recommends Weet-Bix and Vita Brits as the best packaged cereals.
5. Leftover veggies heated with an egg tossed through (who says you can't do veggies for breakfast).
6. Frozen spinach and frozen peas, heated in a bowl with an egg and some Parmesan tossed through (and heated to cook the egg).

7. Haloumi cheese grilled (use a sandwich press or a pan) with sardines and olives.
8. Smoothies (coconut or yoghurt based), bulked up with chia seeds, whey powders, LSA etc.
9. Sugar-free (fruit-free) muesli: The Muesli has created a delicious sugar-free option. And this from Metabolic Food.

When eating out:

10. Eggs and bacon on toast... and mushrooms and spinach and avocado.
11. Porridge with berries and yoghurt, only if both are unsweetened. It's hard to find – and justifying paying \$\$ for – a porridge in a café that isn't super sweetened with banana and honey etc. I tend to avoid, to be honest.
12. Smoked salmon on toast.
13. Vegetable juice (but be warned: carrot and beetroot are almost as high in sugar as fruit).

On the run (at airports, when travelling):

14. Plain yoghurt
15. Nuts
16. Coconut water

Beware: muesli!!

'Choice' recently tested 159 mueslis available in Australia. To the right is the list of those with the lowest sugar. Note: some mueslis contained up to 43.3% sugar, making them more sugary than Coco Pops!

| Brand/product (ranked by sugar content) | Sugars (g per 100g) | Total fat (g per 100g) | Saturated fat (g per 100g) | Sodium (mg per 100g) | Fibre (g per 100g) | Price per kg (\$) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Biogenic Health Foods Yeast Free & Wheat Free Muesli | 1.1 | 20.1 | 4.9 | 112 | 8.9 | 9.44 |
| Food for Health Life Food The Liver Cleansing Muesli | 1.7 | 23.6 | 3.2 | 14 | 132 | 15.90 |
| Macro Natural Unsweetened Muesli No Added Fruit | 1.6 | 18.5 | 2.6 | 2 | 9.3 | 6.99 |
| Real Good Food Organic Fruit Free Muesli | 1.7 | 17.4 | 2.4 | 5 | 0.5 | 17.18 |
| Heartland Harvest "dry roasted" | 1.9 | 17.4 | 2.4 | 7.8 | 10.4 | 20.50 |
| Flip Shettons Natural Muesli The One With Just Nuts & Seeds | 2 | 23.9 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 10.5 | 30.30 |

USING THE TABLES for saturated fat, sugars and fibre figures was taken from the nutrition information panel on the pack. For reference, the following table shows the sugar content of some popular cereals. The table is based on the information provided by the manufacturers. The table is based on the information provided by the manufacturers. The table is based on the information provided by the manufacturers.

Some extra little questions I've been asked along the way:

Q: Toothpaste – Is swapping a regular supermarket variety for something without saccharin going too far? Or is saccharin OK? – Wendy

A: Most toothpastes contain no sugar but a very small amount of saccharin, about 0.2 percent of the total volume. There are reports linking saccharin to cancer, but at levels equivalent to about 606 standard tubes of toothpaste every day for 50 years. My take: there are other things to worry about.

Q: I love baking more than anything, how do I swap out sugar in muffins, banana cake etc with something else.

A: Dextrose is a bit tricky. David Gillespie outlines that it weighs about half as much as sugar, but takes up more fluid, so you'll need to play around with it. His wife Lizzy has adapted a bunch of recipes. Stevia in the granulated form can be used exactly like sugar, but I find it has a different taste – sweeter still. I'd personally reduce the amount.

Q: Does something like canned chickpeas suddenly become a no-no cos of sugar in the 'brine'? – Diana

A: Nope, just drain them. You should anyway.

Q: How do I get my kids to go sugar-free? – Pam

A: For this one, I asked David Gillespie to share. I don't have children and I don't yet have an opinion on how (and if) I'd keep all sugar from them:

"Sugary food manufacturers know that time-poor parents just want to know that they can feed their kids a nutritious meal or snack. They also know that the sweeter they make the meal or snack the more likely the child is to want to eat it. The end result is foods with nutrition messages on the packaging and sugar on the inside.

"Your kids should be eating the same things you are, but don't expect them to appreciate you removing the sugar from their lives. This does not mean you shouldn't tell them about the evils of sugar. Information has been proven to make big differences when it comes to children and sugar.

"Here are some rules that we've found work with our kids. All of these must be accompanied by a clear explanation as to why you are prohibiting sugar set out in terms that they will understand clearly affect them."

Continued on next page...



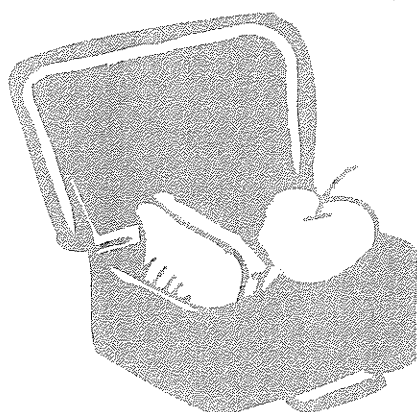
David Gillespie's sugar-free kids tips

- 1. Ensure the house is sugar-free.** This must be absolute. If you have any cracks in the sugar-free wall at home, kids (like sheep looking for a break in the fence) will exploit that weakness and you eventually will be back where you started. If you are firm (and unwavering) about this, kids will accept the new reality a lot quicker than you think.
- 2. Make sure the lunch box is sugar-free.** Most primary school kids are supervised at lunchtime and are not allowed to throw food out. If they're hungry they'll eat what you give them. If they don't eat it, they weren't hungry and they are coming home to a sugar-free house (and afternoon tea) anyway.
- 3. Don't ban tuckshop.** Know the menu and choose carefully for them. They will occasionally choose the wrong thing but that's not the end of the world. Most kids will try hard to obey your rules and when they don't they'll feel guilty about it (and probably won't make a habit of it.)
- 4. Don't be afraid of the new.** When Pumpkin comes home with the tale of woe that Suzie had [insert name of new treat] in their lunch box, don't automatically say no. Check it out. It might be sugar-free or very low sugar. You'd be surprised. And if it isn't sugar-free and you explain that's the reason you're saying no, you'd be even more surprised how accepting they can be about that as well.
- 5. Find another way to reward kids.** Food rewards are easy and mindless, but really should be restricted to circus animals. Your kids deserve better. If they have balanced a ball on their nose for an hour, reward them with a trip to the movies rather than an ice-block. Food is fuel, not a reward.
- 6. Prepare them for parties.** Talk to them about why it's not a good idea to have too much. Ask them to have just one fizzy drink or juice then switch to water or diet soft drinks if they have them. Ask them to veer towards the chippie bowl. Don't prohibit them bringing home party bags. You don't want to turn them into pariahs. But do ration the consumption of the party bag.

You can't expect children to never taste sugar. They will go to parties and they will have treats. And being children, they will chow down with the rest of their mates. Because they are not used to the fructose, they may well find much of the food too sweet in quantity, but they'll still probably eat it. Don't panic. I have followed a rule of 'Party Foods are for Parties' and it seems to work well with kids. Sure, they love their party foods, but it's an extra special treat for them, because they don't get it every other day of the week.

School lunch do's and don'ts

| Item | Don't use | Do use |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Little Lunch | Prepackaged muesli Mars or snack bars | Fruit-free muesli bars, popcorn, cheese and cracker dipping packs or just plain crackers |
| | Packaged fruit snacks (such as Uncle Toby's Fruit Fix) | Fresh fruit or frozen berries |
| Big Lunch | Packaged cakes or yoghurts | Homemade sandwiches and bread rolls |
| Drinks | Juices or soft drinks | Water |
| Other options | Sweets | Potato chips or nuts or 'fish and chips' (tinned tuna and a small bag of crisps) |



* A final note

I *truly* hope you made it this far with this little experiment. I hope that you're feeling cleaner and clearer. And I hope you found the process got you more intimate with your own body and kinder and gentler with it. Because, really, that's what this has been about for me.

I really do recommend choosing now whether you want to stay off it or not. Don't feel pressured. Just choose.

Please do tell loved ones about the benefits of quitting sugar... kindly and gently.

Sarah
xx



Below are the ingredients I mention throughout this ebook. They're a combo of snack ideas and condiments. I mention the brands I like. They're generally the purest, least processed version of a product. And this is not comprehensive... just the things I turn to. Click on the links to buy them online!!

Tinned tuna and other tinned fish

Haloumi cheese (choose organic varieties where possible; store left-over chunks in a container filled with water)

Activated nuts and seeds (stored in the freezer for extra crunch)

Macadamia and almond pastes. The Macro brand at Woolworths make a good one.

Chia seeds: The Chia Co (available at supermarkets and health food shops)

Tahini

Eggs. Always free-range and organic.

Yogurt: Barambah Organic or Paris Farm

Sheep's Milk Yoghurt: Meredith Dairy

Coconut flakes

Avocado

Goat's cheese: Meredith Dairy

Chicken/turkey, shaved, from the supermarket deli

Cinnamon, whole nibs and as a powder

Kiwi fruit, blueberries and raspberries are the best options. Mandarins, plums, strawberries and oranges are good, too.

Coconut

Olive

Walnut

Macadamia

Chia

Flaxseed

Organic butter

Mustard

Mayonnaise (whole egg only)

Soy/Tamari

Coconut water:

Cocoa nibs

Raw cacao powder

Sugar free carob buds

Yogi Tea (Sweet Chili) teabags

Miessence Berry Radical antioxidant powder

Acai powder: Rio Life (available at health food shops)

Soda water

Maharishi Ayurvedic vata tea

Green tea

Licorice root tea

Roasted dandelion root tea

Chai tea

Vanilla Bean Powder (organic A-grade): I get mine from Ovvio Organics, Sydney

Stevia: This is the best non-fructose alternative. I like the Natvia brand, available at supermarkets and cafes (or click here).

Slippery elm powder

Acidophilus tablets/powders

Vital Greens

Chlorophyll

Chromium

Calcium 600mg and Magnesium 400mg per day. (Best taken in a formula together)

Gymnema