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What Type of Sugar Addict are You?

by Jacob Teitelbaum, MD



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As CAM practitioners, you know the problems associated with using excessive sugar. You've also seen that simply telling people to stop sugar doesn't work – except to leave them feeling like failures. By treating the underlying cause(s) of the person's sugar addiction, though, you not only make it a lot easier to come off the sugar. You also will leave the patient healthier and feeling much better!

There are 4 key types of sugar addiction discussed in my newest book, *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* This article can be used as a patient handout. (You can also e-mail me at endfatigue@aol.com for a free copy that you can modify for your practice.) The simple quiz at the end will identify what is driving each person's sugar cravings.

Are You a Sugar Addict?

If the answer is yes, you are not alone. The average American has 140 to 150 pounds of sugar per person of sugar added to his/her diet each year. Another 18% of our calories come from white flour (which acts a lot like sugar in our bodies). Eating almost twice our weight in sugar and white flour each year, it's not surprising that we have become a nation of sugar addicts. Like many other addictive substances, sugar may leave you feeling a bit better for a few hours, but then wreaks havoc on your body.

In *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!*, we describe the four main types of sugar addicts. In each type, there are different forces driving the addiction, and in all four types the excess sugar leaves people feeling much worse overall. By treating the underlying causes that are active in your type of addiction, you will find that not only do your sugar cravings go away, but you also feel dramatically better overall.

Here's more good news. Once you have broken your sugar addiction, your body will usually be able to handle sugar in moderation. This means saving sugar for dessert or snacks where it belongs, and going for quality, not quantity. Dark chocolate is especially OK.

We will also discuss how to "have your cake and eat it too," and how to use natural sugar substitutes to get the pleasure – without paying the cost. It is not our goal to eliminate things you love. Our goal instead is to teach you how to get the most pleasure you can, in a way that is healthy for your body and leaves you feeling better. In medicine, we have a simple rule: Never take away something pleasurable from a person's diet without substituting something equally pleasurable.

Why Is Sugar Addictive?

For thousands of years, humans ate sugar found naturally in their food. Sugar was not a problem; it was a treat. But now more than one-third of the calories we consume come from sugar and white flour added by food processing. Our bodies simply were not designed to handle this massive load.

Many of you have already noticed that although sugar gives you an initial high, you crash several hours later, and this leaves you wanting more sugar. In fact, sugar acts as an energy loan shark, taking away more energy than it gives. Eventually, your "credit line" runs out and you find yourself exhausted, anxious, and moody.

The Long-Term Consequences of Sugar Addiction

In addition to the immediate fatigue and emotional problems, sugar also causes many long-term health problems. For example, our consumption of high-fructose [corn](#) syrup has risen 250% in the past 15 years – and our rate of diabetes has increased approximately 45% during the same time period. Although the sugar industry sometimes tries to confuse the public by claiming that corn syrup is not sugar, it is a form of sugar as far as your body is concerned – and more toxic than cane sugar.

Some chronic medical problems associated with excess sugar in our diet include:

- fatigue and pain
- chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia
- chronic sinusitis
- irritable bowel syndrome and spastic colon
- cancer
- metabolic syndrome with high cholesterol and hypertension
- heart disease
- hormonal problems
- candida and yeast infections
- ADHD
- anxiety and depression

This is the short list. The actual list could go on for pages! Sugar is also a mood-altering substance, which is no surprise to anyone with a sweet tooth. For all these reasons, it's

likely that if sugar growers tried to win FDA approval today, they'd have a tough time getting permission to sell their product.

But the fact is that sugar is everywhere in our diet, and it is dumped into what we eat and drink during food processing. With one-third of our calories coming from sugar and white flour, and the stress of modern life increasing, we are seeing the makings of the "perfect storm" of medical problems. *Eating sugar causes blood sugar to surge, insulin to spike, and fat to get deposited throughout your body. Obesity, often accompanied by diabetes and heart disease, is just one more consequence of our high-sugar diet.*

The Value of Sugar Detox

I know the value of ridding the body of excess sugar. For more than 30 years I have incorporated sugar detox into treatments for countless patients suffering from chronic health problems. I have also seen thousands of people whose chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia were aggravated by their sweet tooth.

I also understand the problem firsthand. A former sugar addict myself, I came down with chronic fatigue syndrome in 1975. Eliminating my sugar addiction was an important part of my recovery.

Sugar addiction is the canary in the coal mine. It usually points to a larger problem that is also dragging you down. We don't have anything against sugar. We simply don't want you feeling poorly and getting sick because of it. In fact, we want you to feel great! And most of you will when you treat the problems accompanying your sugar addiction. Ready to get off of the "sugar roller coaster"? We're happy to guide the way.

The basics of sugar detox are, of course, diet related – the standard method used to overcome sugar addiction. But an even deeper level of treatment is necessary to produce wellness. If you have tried the "cold turkey" approach to sugar addiction without nutritional strategies, treatment guidelines, and support, you probably found success elusive. That's because getting rid of the sugar is but one step in an overall comprehensive approach that must address the mind, body, and spirit.

The problem with many medical self-help books is that they pick off a little corner of the problem and miss the big picture, so often you get frustrated and stop your program without getting well. My goal in writing *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* is to give you an organized *step-by-step approach for each type of sugar addiction*, so you can effectively and easily kick sugar addiction – along with the hidden problems driving your addiction.

The Four Types of Sugar Addiction

To beat sugar addiction, first you'll need to figure out which type of addict you are. Different kinds of sugar addiction have different underlying causes and require different treatments. Here are the four key types:

Type 1: The Energy Loan Shark. *Chronically exhausted and hooked on quick hits of*

caffeine and sugar

When daily fatigue causes sugar (and caffeine) cravings, sometimes all you need is to improve nutrition, sleep, and exercise. When your energy increases, you won't need sugar and caffeine for an energy boost. This can often be done fairly easily. Instead of "energy loan shark" drinks, optimize nutritional support with a good vitamin powder (I like the "Energy Revitalization System" vitamin powder by Enzymatic Therapy or Integrative Therapeutics – one simple drink replaces over 35 tablets of supplements). In addition, 2 studies we have done have shown that a special energy nutrient called ribose (ironically, a sugar – but a healthy one) increases energy by an average of 45% to 60% after 3 weeks. My daily regimen is to add a 5 gram scoop to the vitamin powder each morning.

Quick Quiz

- Do you feel tired much of the time? (20 points)
- Need coffee to get jump-started in the morning? (10 points)
- What is the average number of ounces of caffeinated coffee or soda or "energy drinks" you drink daily? (Score 2 points for each ounce.)
- Do you repeatedly crave sweets or caffeine for energy to get through the day? (25 points)
- Are you gaining weight? Or having trouble losing weight? (Score 1 point for every two pounds gained over the past three years.)

Score

0–30: No problem. Skip to the next quiz.

31–50: You are treating your fatigue with sugar and caffeine – which are energy "Loan Sharks."

Over 50: You are a sugar and caffeine junkie. Learn how to restore your energy production naturally, so that you can cut back on sugar and still feel great.

Use the SHINE Protocol (Sleep, Hormonal support, Infection control, Nutritional support, Exercise) to optimize your energy – naturally!

Type 2: Feed Me Now or I'll Kill You. *When life's stress has exhausted your adrenal glands*

For those of you who get irritable when you're hungry and crash under stress, it is important to treat your adrenal exhaustion.

Increasing water and salt intake (unless you have high blood pressure or heart failure), a high-protein diet with frequent smaller meals (called grazing), and realizing that life is not an ongoing crisis (contrary to the impression given by some in the news media) help your adrenal stress handler glands to stabilize. Natural support with licorice, vitamin B5, vitamin C and adrenal glandulars (all present in a product called Adrenal Stress End by Integrative Therapeutics) make recovering much easier.

Quick Quiz

- Are you very irritable when hungry? Do you get a "feed me *now* or I'll kill you" feeling? (35 points)
- Is life a crisis to you? (15 points)
- Do you enjoy the rush of energy you feel when you are in a crisis? (15 points)

Score

0–24: You are probably a type B, "low-key" person with healthy adrenals.

25–34: You are developing early stages of adrenal fatigue.

35–65: This suggests moderate to severe adrenal exhaustion.

Type 3: The Happy Twinkie Hunter. *Sugar cravings caused by yeast/candida overgrowth*

For those of you with chronic nasal congestion, sinusitis, spastic colon, or irritable bowel syndrome, treating yeast overgrowth is critical. This can be done effectively with "pearl-coated" probiotics and both prescription and natural antifungals.

Quick Quiz

- Do you have chronic nasal congestion or sinusitis? (50 points)
- Spastic colon or irritable bowel syndrome (gas, bloating, diarrhea or constipation)? (50 points)
- Have you taken antibiotics for any type of infection for more than 2 consecutive months, or shorter courses more than 3 times in a 12-month period? (20 points)
- Have you been treated for acne with antibiotic pills for one month or longer? (50 points)
- Have you had recurrent fungal/yeast infections (including skin, pelvic, or nail)? (20 points)
- Do you have postnasal drip or clear your throat a lot? (20 points)
- Do you have food allergies? (20 points)

Score

If your total is 50 or higher, you likely have a yeast/candida overgrowth .

Type 4: Depressed and Craving Carbs. *Hormonal deficiencies – sugar cravings caused by your period, menopause, or andropause*

For women who feel worse around their menstrual cycle, or whose problems increased when they entered perimenopause in their 40s, estrogen and progesterone deficiency may be driving sugar cravings. In a woman's earlier years, this is likely to reflect as premenstrual syndrome (PMS, with associated progesterone deficiency), with severe irritability around your periods. In your mid-40s, as estrogen deficiency begins, estrogen or progesterone deficiency often produces increased sugar cravings, fatigue, moodiness, and insomnia around your periods, as well as decreased vaginal lubrication.

For men, testosterone deficiency associated with andropause can also cause sugar craving along with other severe problems. Depression, decreased libido, decreased erectile function, high blood pressure, weight gain, diabetes, or high cholesterol can suggest testosterone deficiency. Interestingly, supplementing with bioidentical natural

testosterone (by prescription) has been shown to help all of these problems.

Standard blood testing for hormonal deficiencies will not reveal the problems until they are very severe, sometimes leaving people deficient for decades. Eliminating the sugar addiction and other problems caused by low estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone can be life transforming.

Quick Quiz

- In women, do you have PMS? (30 points)
- Have you had a hysterectomy or ovarian surgery (30 points)
- Do you have decreased vaginal lubrication? (25 points)
- Do you have decreased sex drive (libido)? (15 points)
- In the week before and around your period (or in general if you no longer have periods), do you experience noticeably worse
 - insomnia? (15 points)
 - headaches? (15 points)
 - fatigue? (15 points)
 - hot flashes or sweats? (20 points)
- In men, do you have 2 or more of the following: decreased motivation or depression, erectile dysfunction, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol? (30 points)

Score

If you scored 30 or higher you likely have estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone deficiency.

What's Causing Your Sugar Addiction?

To make it easy, *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* is structured as a workbook, so that when you're done reading it you will have a treatment protocol tailored to your specific problems. Ready to get a life you love? It's time!

Love and blessings,
Jacob Teitelbaum, MD

Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, is author of the popular free iPhone application "Natural Cures" and the best-selling book *From Fatigued to Fantastic!* (3rd revised edition, Avery/Penguin Group) and *Pain Free 1-2-3 – A Proven Program for Eliminating Chronic Pain Now* (McGraw- Hill). His newest book is *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* (Fairwinds Press; March 2010). Dr. Teitelbaum does frequent media appearances including *Good Morning America*, CNN, Fox News Channel, the *Dr. Oz Show* and *Oprah & Friends*. He lives in Kona, Hawaii. Visit his website: www.Vitality101.com.

Consult your doctor before using any of the treatments found within this site.