

5 Questions to Identify Sugar Addiction

Does the thought of living life sugar-free fill you with horror? If so, you may unknowingly be addicted. In fact, sugar is believed to be **eight times more addictive than cocaine**.

Some people are more sensitive than others, but the more sugar you eat, the more likely it has taken hold of your addictive pathways and is driving you to eat — and drink — far too much.

When sugar hits the bloodstream, it stimulates release of a brain chemical called dopamine, which makes you feel good. The feeling is usually short-lived.

By the time you're licking the chocolate off your fingertips or picking the last crumbs of biscuit from the plate, your dopamine levels will probably have fallen, taking you into a mini-withdrawal.

This can trigger cravings for more sugar, urging you, against your better judgment, to pick up another biscuit or break off another square of chocolate so your brain can have another hit of dopamine.

Before long, the biological signals that would normally control hunger and satiety (fullness) are swiftly being overwhelmed by this dopamine stimulation, to the point where your body (and brain) starts listening only to sugar's cues and ignores the fact that you have already eaten far more than you need.

If you have even the mildest addiction to sugar, there is every chance that your 'off' switch no longer works properly in response to eating, either.

That's why **one biscuit or scoop of ice-cream never seems like enough**, even after a huge meal.

The more sugar you eat, the more your tolerance adapts, so you end up needing more and more sugar to get the same boost — drug addicts and alcoholics experience the same cycle.

Answer honestly yes or no to the following questions...

- Can you eat sweet, starchy or fatty foods until you are over-full?
- Do you feel hungry even after eating a full meal?
- Can you eat large quantities of sweets or stodgy foods even when you're not feeling particularly hungry?
- Do you ever feel ashamed (self-loathing, disgusted or depressed) about your eating habits?
- Do you ever turn to sugar when you are feeling down or upset?

Your relationship with food **may be stuck in a destructive pattern**.

Perhaps you comfort eat or binge. Perhaps sugar (including processed carbs and junk food) fills a greater void in your life than just satisfying a physical craving.

Sugar addiction is far more common than you might think.

It often triggers a compulsive pursuit of foods rich in sugar and carbohydrates in response to both positive ('let's all celebrate with cake!') and negative ('only chocolate will make me happy') feelings.

But quitting sugar is the **nutritional reset** that will enable you to break the cycle of reliance and addiction.

(Written by Karen Thompson)