



# *Kick the Sugar Habit*

By Nancy Desjardins

## Kick the Sugar Habit!

Like many people, I was sugar-addicted for years. I ate sugar all the time and found that, once begun, it was quite difficult to stop. If I had anything sweet in the morning, then I'd yearn for more sweets in the afternoon and then, again, after dinner. It was ridiculous, really, but I couldn't help myself!

**I noticed that I was moody and anxious without really knowing why.** I became irritable and found myself snapping at my friends and family. I lost my temper easily and I realized that I was feeling worn out and falling ill frequently.

As I observed these symptoms in myself, I also was observing similar symptoms in my clients. Along with the symptoms I noticed in myself, they suffered with chronic fatigue, bloating, constipation, and skin problems. I searched for a common thread that might explain all those shared symptoms.

The common thread was sugar. They all described their unquenchable craving for sugary foods and how difficult they found it to overcome those cravings. As a nutritionist,

I knew that the next steps I had to take must be toward a deeper understanding of how sugar behaves in our bodies. The more I studied, the more frightened I became. Research I found compared sugar to heroin in the way it is processed and used. I discovered research showing that sugar dulls the brain, impairs organ function, strips the body of calcium, taps mineral reserves, causes depression and obesity, and leads to cellular death. I was horrified! My steps had led me to one conclusion: Sugar acts like a poison!

**Refining sugar strips it of all nutrients.** In order for our body to process this substance that has no nutrients, it must rob our reserves of vitamins and minerals. When the body looks for nutrients to steal, it targets key minerals, such as calcium, from the bones and teeth. Since calcium is the primary mineral used to neutralize high acid in the cells, we could be left with "toxic" minerals. This is because there is not enough calcium to fight off those high acids. That, then, can lead to calcium becoming toxic, resulting in plaque on the teeth, osteoporosis, arthritis, kidney stones and even hardening of the arteries. Sugar's raiding the body of vital nutrients in order to process itself can lead to the body becoming acidic. Sugar alters entire blood chemistry!

Critical enzymes are unable to do their job when minerals are decreased. Thus, the body is imbalanced causing improper digestion. When this ill-digested food gets into the bloodstream, it can cause the immune system to react by fighting off the "foreign" substance. Becoming sick, then, is easy because your immune system is too busy fighting elsewhere to ward off diseases.

Because sugar is so difficult to break down, the body must use a lot of vitamins and minerals just to try to make use of this toxin. A sudden influx of sugar, even just a

tablespoon, creates a strain on the body. It takes everything it has, such as sodium, magnesium and potassium, just to bring itself back into balance. In other words, sugar creates a chaotic mess in our bodies that takes much of our healthy resources to restore.

### **Sugar doesn't stop there, though!**

At first, sugar is stored in the liver in the form of glycogen. Soon, however, after a daily diet of refined sugar, the liver swells. This causes a backup of sugar— now in fatty acid form—into the blood. And where does it go from there? The frustrating and annoying answer is that it goes to inactive areas like the waist, buttocks, belly and thighs!

Eating sugar kills off the “good,” or symbiotic, bacteria that is needed in the intestines.

Depression, fatigue, and confusion can result from this reaction. The brain needs glutamatic acid to function properly. B vitamins help glutamatic acid divide the brain's stop-go responses. Without the “good bacteria” to process the B vitamins, sleepiness, forgetfulness, and even trouble with simple calculations can occur.

In the long term, it can lead to Alzheimer's Disease or dementia and depression. Raymond Francis, MIT graduate and expert in vitamin science explains sugar's addictive qualities:

*“Animal studies show that regular consumption of sugar causes longlasting changes in brain chemistry, similar to those caused by street drugs such as cocaine or heroin. These changes mean that even a single exposure to sweet, salty or fatty foods will change gene expression, stimulating opioids in the brain. These pleasure chemicals are addictive.”*

**Fifty percent of the ingredients in breakfast cereal are made up of sugar and 2/3 cup of fruit-flavoured yogurt is loaded with 7 teaspoons of sugar.**

An innocent bowl of tomato soup can contain 8 teaspoons and a small bottle of orange juice can contain 10.5! It's no wonder many of us suffer with this insidious addiction!

What?

Head off to work without that latte or Super-Gulp? Don't eat those cinnamon rolls as you rush out the door? Worse yet, avoid anything with refined white sugar? Million of calories-conscious consumers are turning in fear from eating sugar to eating sweet chemicals instead.

If artificial sweeteners are better, why isn't anyone getting thinner?

The good news is that there are many alternatives to refined sugars and, with some know-how, you can kick the sugar habit for good.

**You can add the good stuff to your plate or GLASS! Start JUICING!**

I've been juicing for the past 15 years and I can't stress enough how keeping your menu to liquids in the morning is an excellent way to aid your body's natural repair cycles.

Imagine what it might be like to drink in some of nature's most beneficial components, like liquid sunshine. Do you remember how good the sun feels on your skin?

Along with many of my clients, I like to start the day with a cleansing green drink because of all the alkaline minerals found in leafy greens. The greener the better! Green juices are fantastic for the morning! Because our bodies are usually far too acidic, green juices give us a balancing, settling way to help flush out all of the bad things while imparting the good ones.

Yes, those smoothies are excellent for your breakfast, and they are much better than breakfast cereal that contains fifty percent sugar. If you want to stop your craving; there is your magic potion.

The less healthy your habits, the faster you see the signs of aging. The connection between diet, health, and aging is not a new discovery. I've come to the realization that the only method to ensure a long and healthy life is to curtail the amount of food I ingest on a daily basis.

**But that doesn't mean we have to deprive ourselves.** The key is knowing that some of the foods we eat makes us sick. They can even, eventually, kill us. Experts have known and understood the necessity of a healthy diet for centuries.

No one said such changes in lifestyle and eating habits are easy. No doubt about it: It's a challenging and difficult endeavor for most of us. It involves not only physical activity, but also mental determination and old-fashioned stick-to-itiveness. Every component of healthy living—eating right, exercising, avoiding smoking and alcohol (and the list goes on)—has a huge impact on our health and wellness.

Instead of reaching for pills that mask the cause of our misery, we must learn to pay attention to what our bodies are telling us. The best way to take care of ourselves is to engage in healthy approaches to how we deal with our problems. These approaches need to be natural and efficient with preventative medicine becoming a way of life.

Those who practice preventative approaches to health enjoy happier and cleaner lives with more productive and positive attitudes.

## *About Nancy Desjardins*



*Nancy is a Registered Nutritional Consulting Practitioner and Founder of [www.healthlady.com](http://www.healthlady.com). She has moved her business to a cottage in Bancroft, Ontario, where she's adding, "tree hugger" to her "health nut" title.*

*Her husband, Yvan, and she are living off the grid, relying on the sun and the wind to provide all of their power. A wood stove keeps them warm during those cold Canadian winter months. She's going green big time! She is about as close to carbon-neutral as a person can get. Nancy believes "it's our small step to help the environment."*

*Her new year-round home is a place where she can grow her own organic food and help others, through the website and newsletters, do the same. It's the perfect environment to get her creative juices flowing so she can expand her programs and share her knowledge.*