

Avoid the white killer

Overweight adults and kids are at an all time high! Does anyone care?

You Are What You Eat, by Gillian McKeith speaks directly to this subject. Sugar, especially the refined white variety we put in coffee etc, has no nutritional value. Worse, it causes your insulin levels to spike. The glycemic index is the theory behind of which is that foods that cause insulin spikes will cause you to gain weight, and can lead to type 2 diabetes.

Insulin spikes lead to a “crash” within a few hours after a high carb meal. White sugar has the same effect (insulin spikes) as simple refined carbs such as white bread, white pasta, white rice, baked goods such as donuts.

When you “crash”, this is your insulin levels (your blood sugar levels) dropping after a spike. Insulin regulates blood sugar & if your blood sugar is high after a high carb/sugary meal, insulin levels have to rise to counteract this. This is when you feel sleepy or even hungry again. You are not really hungry, but because your insulin levels have dropped from their unnatural peak, you feel hungry, sluggish, & maybe lightheaded. Then you snack, leading to overeating & weight gain.

If this cycle continues, eventually your body will become insulin resistant—aka type 2 diabetes. Your pancreas will not be able to produce enough insulin, or your body will have become so tolerant to high levels of it, that it no longer has the needed effect: regulation of blood sugar.

This vicious cycle is addictive. A diet high in sugary foods will cause cravings for more sugar. Unused sugar is stored in the liver as glycogen. If there is more than your liver can deal with, it becomes fat. Sugar also slows your metabolism, so you actually burn calories much slower.

Additionally, white sugar is highly processed & grown with chemicals. In short, sugar (included brown sugar) is the worst of the simple refined carbs.

Additionally, artificial sweeteners are not natural, and are made from chemicals. Your best bet is to utilize natural sweeteners such as fruit, honey, dates/date sugar, which have a lower glycemic load and provide additional health benefits.

Fiber is one of the best ways to counteract blood sugar spikes as it slows digestion of food and “flattens out” the spikes. However, when most people think of fiber they think of Benefiber, or Metamucil. This is flawed thinking. The best way to achieve adequate fiber intake is through natural plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, and beans. These foods also provide vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients that are vital for optimal health. Additional benefits of naturally occurring fiber are fewer hormonal imbalances, a stronger immune system, less risk of hemorrhoids and constipation, less risk of varicose veins, fewer cravings, and will help keep you feeling full longer.

Article supplied by Todd Southwick, lead trainer at The Orange Planet. Todd holds a B.S. in Sports Medicine. For more log onto TheOrangePlanet.com