

10 STRATEGIES TO HELP ELIMINATE SUGAR CRAVINGS !

The following 10 strategies can help you to eliminate or minimize your cravings for sugar. Keep in mind that there could be chemical, dietary or psychological reasons for your sugar cravings. Read each of the strategies below and figure if it applies to your eating or lifestyle. Reducing your desire--or addiction for sugar--should not require Herculean will power. Becoming conscious of the physiological and lifestyle factors that stimulate sugar cravings can actually make taming your sweet tooth a piece of cake—so to speak.

1. REDUCE SALT & PRODUCTS WITH SALT

The need for dietary salt from natural sources (sun-dried sea salt) is important. A lack of salt can cause fatigue, stimulate the desire to overeat and often result in cravings for animal protein. Today, there are an abundance of good quality salt products where you can receive benefit from their moderate use, such as solar-evaporated sea salt, miso soybean paste, and natural soy sauce (Tamari or Shoyu). Often, people who are eating animal protein are getting excessive salt from either the processing of the meat or the existing salt within the animal tissues. This can create enormous cravings for sweet. Matter of fact, most of the fast food sold in restaurants is basically meats (burgers) and sugar (milk shakes, apple pie, etc.). *Sudden thirst and a craving for sweet foods is one of the most reliable indicators of excess dietary salt or animal protein.*

2. ELIMINATE OR REDUCE ANIMAL PROTEIN

The four basic food group propaganda was force-fed to the American public in the 1940s along with the myth that animal protein *must* be a dietary staple. Nothing can be further from the truth. The meat and potatoes mentality has to re-think its philosophy since established research shows excess animal protein can lead to a number of diseases including colon and prostate cancer. In fact, in addition to the ethical aspect of animal food consumption, there are ecological, hygienic, quality and numerous other reasons to try eliminating or dramatically reducing animal protein. If you have a big sweet tooth, you'll find avoiding sugar much less of an effort with the reduction or absence of animal protein.

3. REDUCE FOOD VOLUME

Overeating can lead to fatigue, sluggishness and moodiness. In this condition, you're more likely to crave a stimulant like sugar, or caffeinated beverages. Eating more frequently (see #4, below) will allow you to reduce overeating with a minimum of effort.

4. EAT MORE FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

This is one of the most common reasons for sugar cravings--particularly at night. By skipping meals or waiting long periods between them, you cease supplying your blood with

a steady stream of glucose. This makes the blood sugar suddenly lower and by the time you finally get around to eating, your systemic functions and muscle needs for sugar are screaming and suddenly you've got to have something sweet. In this scenario you're also more likely to

end up overeating or craving something fatty, as a compensation for sugar. Fats can temporarily delay cravings, but fats are not a healthy strategy for combating sugar cravings. If this dropping blood sugar profile sounds like you, don't wait more than 3-1/2 to 4 hours between meals.

5. AVOID EATING PRIOR TO BED

If your body is digesting when it requires needed rest, eating close to bed will end up making you not only experience more dreaming, but feel tired upon awakening—because you've been digesting all night! This is part of the pervasive physiological habit for the stimulant of sugar or caffeine in the morning. Good deep sleep will usually produce wide-awake days. Eat a light evening dinner at least 2-1/2 to 3 hours before retiring.

6. AVOID SUGAR

This may sound obvious, however, continuing to eat simple sugars results in a falling blood sugar and in turn, actually stimulates the craving for *more* sugar—and the cycle continues. Even though fruit is a simple sugar, switching to fruit, particularly season fibrous fruit (apples, pears, peaches, apricots, melons, etc.) *instead* of sugar is a good *first step*. It's less concentrated than refined sugar and slower to enter the blood. Ideally, at the skin or pulp of the fruit since fiber slows blood sugar elevation. Keep in mind that tropical fruits usually have a higher sugar content.

7. EXERCISE MODERATELY, BUT CONSISTENTLY

Daily aerobic exercise increases circulation and strengthens will power. Brisk outdoor or indoor (treadmill) walking, biking, light jogging, rowing etc., can increase your sensitivity to the effects of sugar. Try to get 20 to 30 minutes daily of some type of pleasurable and repetitive exercise. Do this a *minimum* of 5 times per week. Getting more exercise will also strengthen your will. Our lives have become so sedentary, merely walking 3 or 4 times weekly is hardly enough.

8. EMPHASIZE NATURAL WHOLE COMPLEX-CARBOHYDRATES

If your daily diet includes whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, oats, buckwheat, millet, barley, etc.), vegetables (roots, greens and round vegetables such as squashes, cabbages, etc.) as a primary fuel, you'll find you automatically crave less sugar. Emphasizing sweet vegetables such as carrots, cooked onions, corn, cabbage, parsnips, squashes, etc., can also add a natural sweetness to meals that satisfies. Including a small amount of beans in salads, soups, dips, as a side dish, or as a spread, can increase your complex carbohydrate ratio so you will feel a need for less sugar.

9. BEWARE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRIGGERS

The many psychological associations we connect with food have a powerful influence. Beware of family associations, movie rituals, familiar restaurants, childhood habits, etc.

10. DON'T SUPPRESS FEELINGS

This does not mean that you have to broadcast every feeling--only those that matter, and to those who really matter to you. Food indulgence, especially with sweets, is a convenient way to anesthetize uncomfortable feelings. While sugar is known to provide sensory pleasure, or temporary mental relief from stressful events, it is known to hinder your energy levels and mental clarity. In the long run, this makes your emotional coping ability more compromised. Eat less, express more!



VERNE VARONA

Verne Varona has become known as one of the most captivating and dynamic health educators in the country. For forty years, his lectures, workshops and media appearances have motivated thousands of people to take better and more conscious care of their health.

Verne is a renowned keynote speaker throughout the US, Canada and Europe with a captivating style that uses humor, insight and practical science to improve and enrich the lives of many. He studied Traditional Chinese Medicine and nutrition at the East West Foundation of Boston, Massachusetts (1970-1974).

He is a frequent guest on a variety of media platforms where his research expertise and entertaining teaching style make him a welcome and often repeat visitor. For five years, he was the nutritional consultant and co-founder of a popular Los Angeles medical group with a clientele that featured well-known entertainment and sports professionals. With his physician associate, Verne co-created, The ODDS Program (Off Dangerous Drugs Safely); a dietary program designed to reverse pharmaceutical drug dependency such as hypertension, diabetes and over-the-counter drug dependency with dietary and lifestyle guidelines that are featured in his published books.

Verne's first book, *Nature's Cancer-Fighting Foods* (2001—Reward/Penguin Group), is currently in a sixteenth printing with a new revision due out in May, 2014, from Perigee Books/Random House. Verne's second book, *Macrobiotics for Dummies* (May, 2009—Wiley Publications), is part of the internationally popular *Dummies* series and is a comprehensive work embracing a flexible, multi-cultural health perspective on body, mind and spirit.

Verne is a native New Yorker living in Manhattan and currently working on several multi-media projects. He is available for comprehensive and personalized counseling via Skype. Contact him at: vv@vernevarona.com