

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR SUGAR AND CARB CRAVINGS UNDER CONTROL

Some people will tell you that craving foods high in sugar and carbs is different than hunger. In fact, the desire or craving for high sugar foods or carbs is hard-wired in the brain. Eating these foods creates a chemical chain reaction that leads to a temporary increase in serotonin levels. Serotonin helps you feel relaxed, less anxious & stressed and improves your mood. If you are struggling with overwhelming cravings for certain trigger foods high in sugar and carbs you may be low in the important feel good brain chemical serotonin.

Metabolically, when you eat foods high in sugar and carbs, you increase both blood sugar levels and insulin levels. You will momentarily raise your serotonin levels due to the increase of insulin but this is a short lived effect and the big swing in blood sugar levels just compounds the cravings problem, making you want more. Increased insulin levels leads to even more cravings, because it's a 'hungry-hormone'. And of course the increase in insulin causes increased fat storage to boot! The WORST way to raise serotonin is by reaching for sugar and carbs.

There are several ways that you can naturally raise this brain chemical which will not only enhance your mood but also lower your appetite, especially for your "trigger" foods. In a recent study on depression where participants were given the nutrient S-HTP (which converts to serotonin) throughout the day to elevate mood the most interesting side effect was weight loss which occurred because the participants reported a significant reduction in appetite.

You can supplement with either Designs for Health 5-HTP Synergy or CraveArrest (Which contains 5-HTP and tyrosine with synergistic nutrients that encourage the synthesis of serotonin and dopamine) which will raise serotonin levels & other essential neurotransmitters. Start with 1 capsule before each meal and increase to 2 capsules if needed.

Instead of reaching for foods to raise your serotonin levels choose from the following tips that will benefit your mood and your health for the long term:

- Exercise - especially outdoors in the bright light, both the movement and the increased oxygen consumption raise serotonin levels.
- Some cravings are thirst in disguise, try drinking a large glass of water (preferably with a squeeze of lemon) and wait a few minutes to see if you're still hungry.
- Get enough sunlight and bright light. If you find that you are craving sugar at four in the afternoon try a brisk walk in the bright sun. If it is overcast go into the brightest room in your house.

- Consume optimal amounts of protein at your 3 meals especially wild game, turkey, cheese and dairy products, whey protein, nuts and seeds.
- If you are having a sweet attack, have a small amount of dark chocolate.
- Take a good multi vitamin/mineral supplement so your body has the building blocks it needs to make its brain chemicals. Also, an increase in the amino acid glutamine improves the body's ability to absorb vitamins and minerals.
- Snack on a piece of fruit combined with a handful of nuts cheese or cottage cheese,
- Avoid stimulants like coffee and caffeinated beverages, the artificial sweetener aspartame and alcohol-all of these can lower serotonin levels over time.
- Use Xylitol as a sweetener (instead of feeding the sugar-craving) which is a naturally produced sugar alcohol that will not sabotage your mood or energy levels the way sugar can. It is almost as sweet as sucrose, which will give you the sweet taste you want and the craving control you need.
- Avoid or at least manage your stress-stress raises cortisol which can exacerbate sugar cravings!