

SUGAR

# 10 Surprising Things Happen After You Stop Eating Sugar

The Ultimate Guide to Kicking Sugar (Part 8)



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By [Flora Zhao](#)

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*In this series, we explore the good and bad sugars and sweeteners, including popular natural ones, uncover the unexpected outcomes of cutting out sugar, and discover the ultimate way to do so.*

"Your body doesn't need added sugar," Dr. Jason Fung, a nephrologist specializing in reversing Type 2 diabetes, told The Epoch Times.

Despite that reality, if you're eating the standard American diet, you're likely getting quite a bit of added sugar. If you decide to cut this out of your diet, with a few reasonable exceptions, you will experience some unexpected changes, research finds.

## 1. Increased and Sustained Energy

"I often call sugars 'The Great Deceiver,'" said Dr. Becky Gillaspy, a chiropractor and author of the book "Intermittent Fasting Diet Guide and Cookbook," during an interview with The Epoch Times. She explained that added sugar quickly breaks down into simple sugars, providing a quick burst of energy, "but then it turns around and robs that (energy) from us."

In the first few days of ceasing added sugar intake, we may experience some discomfort. According to Dr. Gillaspy, this is because the body has become accustomed to relying on the quick energy sugar provides and, as a result, exhibits cravings for it.

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However, the body gradually receives more stable and sustained energy when we shift to obtaining carbohydrates and other nutrients from natural foods and whole grains.

Many people find themselves more energetic after quitting sugar for a while.

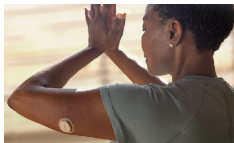
The body quickly adapts and can run on whatever fuel is most available. "Our metabolism switches from being a better sugar burner to being a better fat burner," said Dr. Gillaspy. This leads to a more sustained energy level, increased metabolic flexibility, and reduced food cravings.

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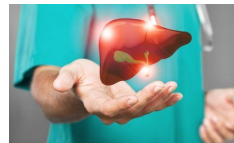
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"Your body will reset, becoming a body that doesn't need sugar," Dr. Fung said.

## 2. Improved Insulin Sensitivity

Stable blood sugar is a natural benefit of quitting sugar, and what's even better is that quitting also improves insulin resistance.

High sugar intake raises blood sugar levels, prompting the pancreas to release more insulin to shuttle sugar into cells, including fat cells. If this is happening often, our cells begin to resist insulin's demands to take in this sugar, leaving it in the bloodstream where it poses significant health risks

According to a review study ([pdf](#)) published in Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine in 2019, the prevalence of insulin resistance ranges from 10 percent to 30 percent among different populations.

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A [previous study](#) conducted by the University of Southern California showed that reducing added sugar intake by 40 grams and decreasing calorie intake from added sugar by 5 percent can lead to a 20 percent decrease in insulin secretion. [Another study](#) based on the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) database in the United States revealed that each 8-ounce or 1-cup sugar-sweetened beverage increases insulin resistance by 6 percent.

Fasting insulin is one of the markers used to measure insulin resistance. [A study](#) involving 2,500 adults showed that those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages had lower fasting insulin levels than those who did.

### 3. Reduced Inflammation and Pain

"The best part [of quitting sugar] is no pain," a photographer named Pat gratefully told Dr. Gillaspy. She used to suffer from severe joint and muscle pain—almost to the point of giving up her photography job, which required standing all day. Now, "the 52-year-old Pat runs literal circles around the 35-year-old former Pat," Dr. Gillaspy described.

Excessive sugar consumption triggers the release of pro-inflammatory substances in the body. [A study](#) involving nearly 10,000 adults in England showed that individuals who consumed more added sugar from beverages and tea, coffee, and cereal had higher levels of inflammatory markers in their blood.

[Research in the field](#) of immunology has indicated an urgent need to understand the impact of excessive sugar intake on the development of human inflammatory diseases. High levels of sugar in the diet can lead to rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease, and low-grade chronic inflammation.

## 4. Easier Weight Management

Losing weight becomes easier after quitting sugar.

Jessica Russo, a clinical psychologist in private practice in Philadelphia, mentioned during an interview with The Epoch Times that one of her patients, who had struggled with binge eating and excess weight, lost 10 pounds within a month after cutting out added sugar and other refined carbohydrates.

Another individual who successfully lost 54 pounds told Dr. Gillaspy that most of their weight was shed after seriously committing to quitting sugar.

Sugar stimulates insulin secretion, and elevated insulin levels promote fat storage; this is why insulin resistance makes weight loss more challenging. A low-sugar diet leads to lower insulin levels, which, in turn, encourages cells to release fat.

A [meta-analysis](#) assessing over 60 studies published in the British Medical Journal indicated that reducing dietary sugar intake led to



an average weight loss of 0.80 kilogram (approximately 1.76 pounds). Another [prospective cohort study](#) involving over 120,000 individuals found that consuming sugar-sweetened beverages resulted in a continuous weight gain of up to 1 pound over four years, while drinking one less sugar-sweetened beverage a day reduced annual weight gain by approximately [25 percent](#).

## 5. Enhanced Mental Well-Being

Ms. Russo explained that sugar depletes vitamin B, and vitamin B is crucial for the human brain. A deficiency in vitamin B can lead to reduced cognitive clarity and a decline in thinking abilities, which is also one of the reasons sugar consumption can cause irritability.

According to Ms. Russo, depression and anxiety are linked to inflammation. Eliminating sugar and reducing inflammation tends to make individuals feel more relaxed and hopeful. We often notice this difference when we pay a bit more attention. Therefore, when feeling down, we can reflect on whether it is due to excessive sugar consumption.

[A study](#) published in the Frontiers in Public Health in 2023 involving about 16,000 obese American adults revealed that individuals with higher total sugar intake in their diets had a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms. Those with the highest total sugar intake had a 50 percent higher risk of developing depression than those with the lowest, a conclusion corroborated by other [meta-analyses](#) and [cohort studies](#).

## 6. Heightened Taste Sensitivity

When people get used to eating fewer sweet foods, they often realize that they do not actually need as much sweetness.

"One of the most common things that shocks people when they give up sugar is that they lose their taste for sugar," said Dr. Gillaspie. Ms. Russo also noted that many individuals find very sweet foods unpleasant in taste after cutting back on their sugar intake.

This is because when following a high-sugar diet, the brain's chemical responses and taste buds can become dulled to sweetness; however, cutting out sugar can restore sensitivity to these organs, allowing us to find satisfaction with smaller amounts of sugar.

"It (giving up sugar) opens up this whole new flavor world for foods that you would have not enjoyed before," Dr. Gillaspy said, using her own story as an example. When she was younger, she had a strong sugar addiction and was overweight, and foods like Brussels sprouts and sauerkraut would never have been found on her plate. However, after quitting added sugar, she acquired a taste for these ingredients and found them incredibly delicious.

## 7. Improved or Reversed Fatty Liver

Excessive sugar consumption leads to fatty liver, "essentially due to the way fructose is metabolized," explained Dr. Fung.

He said that when referring to sugar, we are usually talking about sucrose, which comprises one glucose molecule and one fructose molecule. While every cell in the body can utilize glucose as an energy source, fructose cannot be used by any cells. Instead, it goes directly to the liver, where some of it is converted into fat.

"So fructose, refined sugars, are much worse for you than regular sugar," emphasized Dr. Fung. They are far worse than empty calories or even regular starch. That is why quitting sugar is crucial in preventing fatty liver disease progression.

[A study](#) published in Gastroenterology involving children and adolescents showed that when total calorie intake remained the same, reducing added fructose intake over nine consecutive days (controlled at 4 percent of total calories) could decrease the median liver fat percentage from 7.2 percent to 3.8 percent. Furthermore, the conversion of fructose to fat in the liver significantly decreased. In another [eight-week trial](#), restricting dietary sugar intake led to a reduction in the conversion of fructose to liver fat from about 35 percent to about 24 percent.

[A study](#) published in the British Medical Journal Open in 2017 suggests that reducing added sugar intake by 20 percent could reduce the prevalence of hepatic steatosis, fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. A 50 percent reduction in intake would have an even more significant proportional effect.

## 8. Improved Gut Health and Immunity

Many may not realize that digestive discomfort or frequent colds could be attributed to excessive sugar consumption.

[Research suggests](#) that dietary sugar affects immune cells in the gut, leading to the replacement of beneficial bacteria by harmful ones. Furthermore, the body [alters the gut microbiota](#) to detoxify the toxins resulting from excessive sugar intake, disrupting the natural balance. This disruption reduces intestinal epithelial integrity and mucosal immunity. Additionally, excessive sugar consumption and high blood sugar levels can [increase gut permeability](#), compromising the gut's protective barrier and enhancing infection susceptibility.

Ms. Russo also pointed out that sugar intake can reduce the body's zinc levels, which is crucial for the immune system.

## 9. Improved Skin Health

Quitting sugar might be the most straightforward and cost-effective approach to appearing younger and eliminating facial and skin blemishes.

Sugar undergoes oxidative reactions with proteins in our bodies, producing [advanced glycation end products \(AGEs\)](#). AGEs are a complex group of substances, and apart from some individual components, they are generally toxic to the body and can accumulate in tissues.

Over time, [skin problems](#) may arise, such as browning, yellowing, poor elasticity, and deeper wrinkles.

AGEs can also cause internal changes in the skin. They hinder wound healing, disrupt skin cell function, induce apoptosis, and trigger



inflammation.

Quitting sugar not only promotes healthier and more youthful skin but also reduces toxins in the body, thus preventing age-related diseases.

AGEs can contribute to age-related diseases, including neurodegenerative disorders, atherosclerosis, and chronic inflammatory conditions. The accumulation of AGEs is accelerated in conditions like insulin resistance and diabetes, leading to a range of comorbidities.

## 10. Reduced Risk of Chronic Metabolic Diseases

After quitting sugar for a period, you will notice improvements in several blood markers; these are mainly associated with reduced fructose intake.

Half of sucrose consists of fructose, whereas high-fructose corn syrup, widely used in processed foods, is 42 percent to 55 percent fructose.

Clinical evidence suggests a high-fructose diet can lead to too many lipids in the blood and related metabolic diseases.

Additionally, liver metabolism of fructose leads to an [increase in uric acid](#), a precursor of gout. A large-scale [prospective cohort study](#) confirmed that frequent consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and [high fructose intake](#) are associated with an elevated risk of high levels of uric acid and gout.

Given the detrimental links between dietary sugar intake and various endocrine and metabolic issues, a [review study](#) published in the British Medical Journal in 2023 plainly stated, "No reliable evidence shows beneficial associations between dietary sugar consumption and any health outcomes."

*Next: If you lack confidence in quitting sugar and are unsure where to begin, rest assured that there is a scientific, evidence-based approach to quitting sugar. But before getting into that, let's see how sugar could impact a person's mental status.*

Read the entire ["The Ultimate Guide to Kicking Sugar" series here.](#)



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