

**Reduce or eliminate caffeine.** The ups and downs of caffeine include dehydration and blood sugar swings, and may cause sugar cravings to become more frequent.

**Drink water.** Sometimes sweet cravings are a sign of dehydration. Before you go for the sugar, have a glass of water and wait a few minutes to see what happens. Caution: soft drinks are now America's number one source of added sugar.

**Eat sweet vegetables and fruit.** They are naturally sweet, healthy and delicious. The more you eat, the less you'll crave sugar.

**Use gentle sweets.** Avoid chemicalized, artificial sweeteners and foods with added sugar. Use gentle sweeteners like maple syrup, brown rice syrup, dried fruit, stevia and barley malt.

**Get physically active.** Start with simple activities like walking or yoga. Start with 10 minutes a day and gradually increase. Being active helps balance blood sugar levels, boosts energy, and reduces tension which will eliminate the need to self-medicate with sugar!

**Get more sleep, rest and relaxation.** Simple carbohydrates, such as sugar, are the most readily usable forms of energy for an exhausted body and mind. If you are in a chronic state of stress and/or sleep deprivation, your body will crave the quickest form of energy there is: sugar.

**Evaluate the amount of animal food you eat.** According to yin/yang principles of eating (such as in Macrobiotics and TCM), eating too much animal food (yang) can lead to cravings for sweets (yin). Imbalances can also occur with too little animal protein (for some individuals). Through experimentation and intuition, you can find which foods create balance for you as an individual.

**Eliminate fat-free or low-fat packaged snack-foods.** These foods contain high quantities of sugar to compensate for lack of flavor and fat, which will send you on the roller-coaster ride of sugar highs and lows.

**Experiment with spices.** Coriander, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and cardamom will naturally sweeten your foods and reduce cravings.

**Slow down and find sweetness in non-food ways!** Every craving is not a signal that your body biologically requires sugar. Cravings often have a psychological component. By identifying the psychological causes of food cravings and substituting lifestyle and relationship adjustments accordingly, you can begin to find balance and take charge of your health. When life becomes sweet enough itself, no additives are needed!

