

SUGAR

BETTER UNDERSTAND WHY
AND HOW TO LIMIT ADDED
SUGARS IN YOUR FOOD.



SUGAR 101

What it does to your body

Sugar may be sweet. But what it does to your health is anything but. Here's what I mean...

HOW SUGAR AFFECTS YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

- **Insulin resistance:** Sweetened foods like fizzy drinks, cookies, and lollies spike your blood sugar (also known as blood glucose). As your blood sugar rises, your pancreas pumps out insulin to help get glucose into your cells. But if you eat a high-sugar diet for too long, your body can become less sensitive to insulin. This is known as insulin resistance, and it can lead to diabetes.
- **Weight:** Sugary foods are low in nutrients and fibre, but high in calories. That's why high-sugar diets are linked with weight gain. Also, people who eat more sugar tend to have more visceral fat (aka belly fat), a risk factor for chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.
- **Liver:** Your liver uses a form of sugar (fructose) to make fat. Eating too much sugar can cause fatty buildup in the liver and, over time, put you at risk of liver disease.
- **Heart:** High sugar diets increase the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high triglycerides, and high LDL "bad" cholesterol.
- **Skin:** Diets high in added sugars are linked with acne and premature aging.
- **Energy Fluctuations:** Sugary foods and drinks can lead to rapid spikes and crashes in energy levels, which can worsen feelings of fatigue and affect concentration and focus. For individuals with OCD and anxiety, maintaining stable energy levels throughout the day is crucial for managing symptoms and coping with triggers effectively.

What it does to your mind

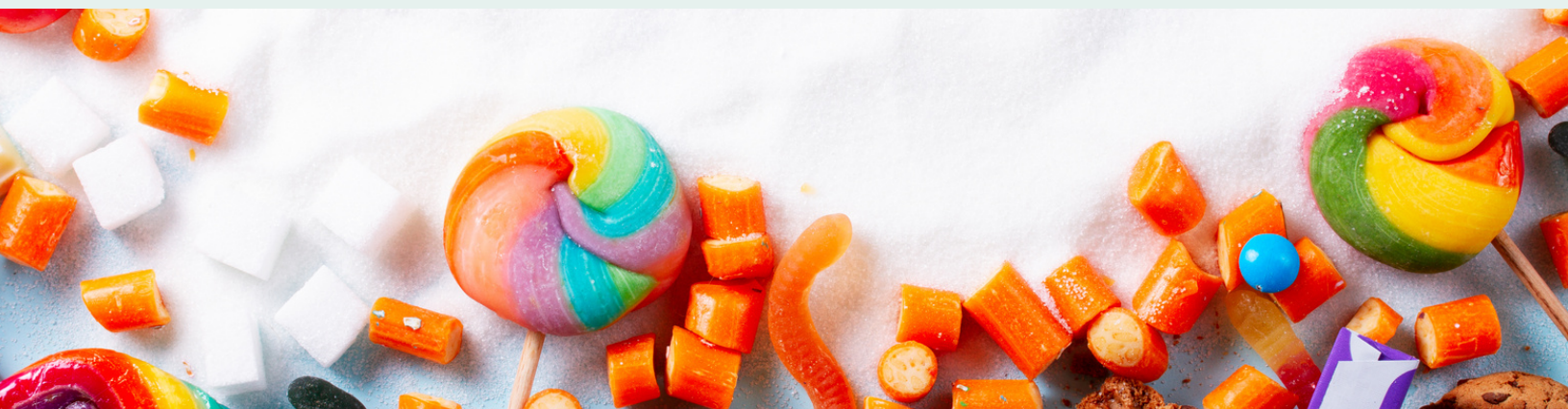
HOW SUGAR AFFECTS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- **Increased Anxiety and Obsessive Thoughts:** High sugar consumption has been linked to increased anxiety levels and may exacerbate obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours in individuals with OCD. Fluctuations in blood sugar levels can disrupt neurotransmitter function and contribute to mood swings, making it harder to manage symptoms effectively.
- **Inflammation and Brain Health:** When blood sugar stays high, it damages blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood to the brain. This can lead to brain fog, memory, and attention issues.
- Excessive sugar intake has been associated with inflammation in the body, including the brain. Chronic inflammation can impair cognitive function and exacerbate symptoms of OCD and anxiety.
- Consuming large amounts of sugar can disrupt neurotransmitter balance in the brain, particularly serotonin and dopamine, which play key roles in regulating mood and emotions.
- Chronic inflammation triggered by excessive sugar intake has also been linked to the development and progression of depression.
- Prolonged high-sugar diets are linked to an increased risk of developing dementia.
- **Disrupted Sleep Patterns:** Consuming sugary snacks or drinks, especially close to bedtime, can disrupt sleep patterns and lead to poor quality sleep. Sleep disturbances can worsen symptoms of anxiety and OCD and make it harder to manage intrusive thoughts and/or compulsions effectively.
- **Addictive Properties:** Sugar has been found to activate the brain's reward system in a similar way to drugs of abuse, leading to cravings and potentially addictive behaviour. This can create a vicious cycle of dependence on sugary foods to cope with stress or negative emotions.

60 NAMES FOR SUGAR

Added sugar is in nearly every packaged product. Below are ingredients you may see on the package that are alternate names for sugar. Ingredients are listed by percentage within the product; the first ingredient being of the highest quantity. Look to see if multiple ingredients below are listed on the package. Companies will often use different types of sugar so that they don't have to list it has the first ingredient.

Agave Nectar/Syrup	Dextrin	Malt syrup
Barbados sugar	Dextrose	Maltose
Barley malt	Diastatic malt	Mannose
Beet sugar	Ethyl maltol	Maple syrup
Blackstrap molasses	Evaporated cane juice	Muscovado sugar
Brown rice syrup	Fructose	Molasses
Brown sugar	Fruit juice	Panela sugar
Buttered sugar/buttercream	Fruit juice concentrate	Palm sugar
Cane juice crystals	Golden syrup	Panocha
Cane sugar	Galactose	Powdered sugar
Caramel	Golden sugar	Raw sugar
Carob syrup	Golden syrup	Refiner's syrup
Castor sugar	Glucose	Rice syrup
Coconut sugar	Glucose syrup solids	Saccharose
Confectioner's sugar	Grape sugar	Sorghum syrup
Corn syrup	High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)	Sucanat
Corn syrup solids	Honey	Sucrose
Crystalline fructose	Invert sugar	Turbinado sugar
Date sugar	Lactose	Treacle
Demerara sugar	Maltodextrin	Yellow sugar



Given the concerning effects excessive sugar intake can have on our overall health and wellbeing, it's important to be mindful of our sugar intake and make conscious choices to prioritise our health and wellbeing. Opting for whole, nutrient-dense foods and reducing our consumption of processed and sugary snacks can go a long way in supporting both our physical and mental health.

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