

THE ULTIMATELY COOLEST WAY TO RAISE YOUR KIDS IN THE NEW ERA

GEEK PARENTING

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**SUPER
RETRO
BOY**

**HEALTHY
HEADPHONES
PROTECTING
LITTLE
EARDRUMS**

ROUTINES

**WHY THEY'RE
GOOD FOR
PARENTING**

CODING

**IT'S GROWING
IMPORTANCE
FOR KIDS**

**TEACHING
KIDS
FINANCE
PREPARING FOR
THE FUTURE**

**IS
WIFI
DANGEROUS?**

| Diet & Health

BY SARA JACKSON

NO SUGAR

SUGAR

FREE

MARCH

I am pretty sure the message has sunk in with most people by now - whether we want to listen to it or

not is a whole other question. Eating excess sugar is bad news for us and for our children - it's directly linked to some of the most prevalent diseases we face in modern life - from obesity, type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease to some cancers. There's stacks of research out there proving the inflammatory action of sugar on our body systems. Aside from the links to disease, this massive inflammation can affect our bodies in many other ways from ageing you rapidly, and contributing to everything from painful joints, rotting teeth to dry, wrinkly skin.

Professor Robert Lustig, paediatric endocrinologist at the University of California has been championing the sugar debate and highlighting the fact that sugar is responsible for causing "two diseases that we never saw in children before 1980" being fatty liver disease and type 2 diabetes. As Lustig says, "both of these diseases used to be the diseases of alcohol. But kids don't drink alcohol. It's not alcohol's calories that make it dangerous, it's the molecule itself. It's the same for sugar".

In the UK in 2014/15, more than 1 in 5 children in Reception, and 1 in 3 children in Year 6 were measured as obese or overweight, according to the HSCIC. Non-alcohol fatty liver disease is considered to be the most common liver problem in the western world with 20-30% of the population affected, the vast majority undiagnosed. This is scary stuff and it's the excess sugar we're eating day

in day out that is driving these diseases.

It's not just the sugar we know we're eating, but as Lustig points out, three-quarters of the food in the grocery store contains added sugar, so people consume it without realising it. A little is OK. A lot is not. And most people aren't aware of the guidelines. In the UK, adults are advised not to eat more than 30g of free sugars a day, which is roughly seven sugar cubes. Children should have less than this - according to the NHS, the rules are no more than 19g a day for children aged 4 to 6 years old (5 sugar cubes), and no more than 24g (6 sugar cubes) for children aged 7 to 10 years old. To put this into perspective, Public Health England says

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that the average child is eating the equivalent of three cubes of sugar every morning for breakfast with food such as cereals, fruit juices and jams that are often billed as 'healthy'. Tomorrow morning, have a good look at how much sugar is in your family's favourite cereal and be prepared as you may be quite shocked.



Juices, white bread and white pasta are some of the things to cut down on. Sweeteners should not be used as an alternative.

I urge you to set a good example to the rest of your family and start to encourage awareness about the sugar you are knowingly and unknowingly eating every day. Get savvy and read the labels on the back of your food and try to go for wholefoods that you find in nature not in a factory.

I work with many clients to help them get off sugar and break their addiction. Scarily it's been shown that sugar is addictive in the same way that cocaine and nicotine are due to the way sugar interacts with the reward centres of our brain. Sugar addiction also involves the most common stages of addiction - cravings, tolerance (so you're never able to get enough), and withdrawal.

So What's The Best Way To Kick The Habit?

It's going to hurt, but the most effective way is to go cold turkey and take out sugar as well as reducing refined carbs in your diet like white bread and white pastas. Like sugar, they provide zero nutrition, and are forms of processed sugars and starches that don't exist in nature. Don't fall into the trap of artificial sweeteners because not only do they feed the sugar cravings, but there is mounting evidence against chemicals like aspartame which many consider a neurotoxin due to its strong association with brain tumours and seizures. Scary stuff....

I'm not pretending it's a walk in the park, but there's a few things you can do to make it a little easier to stick at it.

Make sure you have plenty of support around you, especially for the first week or so which is definitely the hardest and have plenty of distractions at hand for when those cravings kick in.

After you get through the first week though you'll notice that your palette changes and you can actually taste food and naturally sweet food like fruit suddenly seems sooo much sweeter. If those cravings kick in, grab an apple or some blueberries and after a few weeks, you most probably wouldn't want that packet of Haribos that you used to happily munch on because they will be so sickly sweet to your newly attuned tastebuds and will make you feel pretty gross and might even give you a headache.

If you know that a stressful day usually has you reaching for the emergency chocolate stash, then try to find other ways to deal with those emotions. Simple breathing exercises for even just a minute, but repeated throughout the day can be so effective or taking a quick walk around the block can take the edge off.

If you're eating balanced meals with plenty of lean protein, healthy fats like avocados, nuts and seeds, whole foods and eating rainbow coloured veggies with a little fruit, you will feel full and satisfied, leaving little room for those pesky sugar cravings to set in.

Stick with it. I have seen the most incredible results with clients who are able to get off the bad stuff - blood sugar levels balance, stubborn weight falls off, energy levels soar, skin issues disappear and vitality returns. And you're setting the most important example for your kids - they will follow your actions more than your words. You won't look back... ●



About the author

Sara Jackson hails from Sydney, Australia but now lives and runs a busy clinic in London. She is a registered nutritional therapist and naturopath, consultant, home cook and a busy mum of two. She's here to help you and your family become a whole lot happier and healthier. Sara can be contacted on :

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