

Sugar Facts/"I Quit Sugar" Synopsis

The Stats

The average American consumes 3 pounds of sugar a week and 130 pounds a year, reports Forbes.com. This is equal to about 3,550 pounds of sugar in a lifetime. The consumption of added sugar accounts for an intake of 500 calories per day, which can cause a weight gain of 1 pound per week.

American Heart Association Recommendations

The recommendations for added sugar are provided by the American Heart Association as an upper limit. This means that there is **no minimum amount you need to take in each day**, but there is a maximum. These recommendations are based on gender. Women should limit sugar intake to no more than 6 teaspoons per day, which provides about 100 calories. Men should limit sugar intake to no more than 9 teaspoons, or about 150 calories. **In contrast, the average adult consumes 22 teaspoons per day.**

Other Recommendations

The Institute of Medicine, a charter of the National Academy of Sciences, provides sugar recommendations different from those of the American Heart Association. The IOM states that added sugars should account for no more than 25 percent of the calories you eat. If you are on a standard 2,000-calorie diet, this means that you should be eating no more than 500 calories from sugar, or 125 grams. Like all carbohydrates, sugar contains 4 calories per gram.

The USDA recommendations are lower than the IOM's. They state that the combination of added sugars and solid fats -- which include butter, lard and margarine -- should provide no more than 5 to 15 percent of daily calories.

Your body doesn't need to get any carbohydrate from added sugar. That's why the Healthy Eating Pyramid says sugary drinks and sweets should be used sparingly, if at all, and the Healthy Eating Plate does not include foods with added sugars.



4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon – an important fact to keep in mind when reading nutrition labels

The average American consumes 22 teaspoons of added sugar a day, which amounts to an extra 350 calories. While we sometimes add sugar to food ourselves, most added sugar comes from processed and prepared foods. **Sugar-sweetened beverages and breakfast cereals are two of the most serious offenders.**

The American Heart Association (AHA) has recommended that Americans drastically cut back on added sugar to help slow the obesity and heart disease epidemics.

- The AHA suggests an added-sugar limit of no more than 100 calories per day (about 6 teaspoons or 24 grams of sugar) for most women and no more than 150 calories per day (about 9 teaspoons or 36 grams of sugar) for most men.
- There's no nutritional need or benefit that comes from eating added sugar. A good rule of thumb is to avoid products that have a lot of added sugar, including skipping foods that list "sugar" as the first or second ingredient. However, the growing use of alternative sweeteners can make it difficult to determine which ingredients count as sugar, because there are multiple sources of sugar with different names.

By law, The Nutrition Facts Label must list the grams of sugar in each product. But some foods naturally contain sugar, while others get theirs from added sweeteners, and food labeling laws don't require companies to differentiate how much sugar is added sugar.

Sugar-sweetened beverages

Soft drinks are a prime source of extra calories that can contribute to weight gain and provide no nutritional benefits. Studies indicate that liquid carbohydrates such as sugar-sweetened beverages are less filling than the solid forms – causing people to continue to feel hungry after drinking them despite their high caloric value. They are coming under scrutiny for their contributions to the development of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic conditions.

- The average can of sugar-sweetened soda or fruit punch provides about 150 calories, almost all of them from sugar – usually high-fructose corn syrup. That's the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of table sugar.

- If you were to drink just one can of a sugar-sweetened soft drink every day, and not cut back on calories elsewhere, you could gain 10-15 pounds in a year.

Cereals and other foods

Choosing whole, unprocessed breakfast foods – such as an apple, or a bowl of steel-cut or old fashioned oatmeal – that don't have lengthy ingredient lists is a great way to avoid eating added sugars. Unfortunately, many common breakfast foods such as ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, cereal bars, instant oatmeal with added flavoring, and pastries can contain high amounts of added sugars.

Some ingredient lists mask the amount of sugar in a product. To avoid having “sugar” as the first ingredient, food manufacturers may use multiple forms of sugar— each with a different name – and list each one individually on the nutrient label. By using this tactic, sugars are represented separately in smaller amounts, which makes it more difficult for consumers to determine how much overall sugar is in a product.

- So don't be fooled – **your body metabolizes all added sugars the same way; it doesn't distinguish between “brown sugar” and “honey.”** When reading a label, make sure you spot all sources of added sugars even if they're not listed as the first few ingredients.

Sweet treats can be enjoyed in moderation, but make sure you're aware of added sugars elsewhere in your diet, such as breads, drinks and cereals.

Industry-sponsored labeling programs can also be confusing. One such program, called Smart Choices, drew scrutiny from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2009 for calling one popular cereal —which is 41 percent sugar—a “Smart Choice.” (The Smart Choices program has since been suspended.)

How to spot added sugar on food labels

Spotting added sugar on food labels can requires some detective work. Though food and beverage manufacturers list a product's total amount of sugar per serving on the Nutrition Facts Panel, they are not required to list how much of that sugar is added sugar versus naturally occurring sugar. That's why you'll need to **scan the ingredients list of a food or drink to find the added sugar**. However, the body doesn't distinguish between natural or added sugars, so paying attention to total sugar is the key.

- Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, so where sugar is listed in relation to other ingredients can indicate how much sugar a particular food contains.
- Added sugars go by many different names, yet they are all a source of extra calories.

Food makers can also use sweeteners that aren't technically sugar—a term which is applied only to table sugar, or sucrose—but these other sweeteners are in fact forms of added sugar. Below are some other names for sugar that you may see on food labels:

Agave nectar	Evaporated cane juice	Malt syrup
Brown sugar	Fructose	Maple syrup
Cane crystals	Fruit juice concentrates	Molasses
Cane sugar	Glucose	Raw sugar
Corn sweetener	High-fructose corn syrup	Sucrose
Corn syrup	Honey	Syrup
Crystalline fructose	Invert sugar	
Dextrose	Maltose	

Artificial sweeteners: sugar-free, but at what cost?

As with everything, there's more to the artificial sweetener story than their effect on weight. Dr. David Ludwig, an obesity and weight-loss specialist at Harvard-affiliated Boston Children's Hospital, has a keen interest in products designed to help people lose weight at keep it off. And what he has learned about artificial sweeteners worries him:

All sweeteners are not created equal

The FDA has approved five artificial sweeteners: saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame, and sucralose. It has also approved one natural low-calorie sweetener, stevia. How the human body and brain respond to these sweeteners is very complex.

One concern is that people who use artificial sweeteners may replace the lost calories through other sources, possibly offsetting weight loss or health benefits, says Dr. Ludwig. This can happen because we like to fool ourselves: "I'm drinking diet soda, so it's okay to have cake." The AHA and ADA also added this caveat to their recommendation. It's also possible that these products change the way we taste food. "Non-nutritive sweeteners are far more potent than table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup. A miniscule amount produces a sweet taste comparable to that of sugar, without comparable calories. Overstimulation of sugar receptors from frequent use of these hyper-intense sweeteners may limit tolerance for more complex tastes," explains Dr. Ludwig. That means people who routinely use artificial sweeteners may start to find less intensely sweet foods, such as fruit, less appealing and unsweet foods, such as vegetables, downright unpalatable.

In other words, use of artificial sweeteners can make you shun healthy, filling, and highly nutritious foods while consuming more artificially flavored foods with less nutritional value.

Artificial sweeteners may play another trick, too. Research suggests that they may prevent us from associating sweetness with caloric intake. As a result, we may crave more sweets, tend to choose sweet food over nutritious food, and gain weight. Participants in the San Antonio Heart Study who drank more than 21 diet drinks per week were twice as likely to become overweight or obese as people who didn't drink diet soda.

But you say you can give up diet drinks whenever you want? Don't be so sure. Animal studies suggest that artificial sweeteners may be addictive. In studies of rats who were exposed to cocaine, then given a choice between intravenous cocaine or oral saccharine, most chose saccharine.

257 Names of Sugar

This is the list of the ingredient names for sugars that you find on packages in the USA and Canada. Some of the sugars are really artificial sweeteners, but have a high calorific value, high enough to be considered an artificial sugar.

Agave nectar (Often with HFCS)	Blackstrap molasses	Coco sugar
Agave syrup (Often with HFCS)	Blonde coconut sugar	Coco sap sugar
All natural evaporated cane juice	Brown rice syrup	Concentrate juice (Often with HFCS)
Amasake	Brown sugar	Concord grape juice concentrate
Amber liquid sugar	Buttered syrup	Confectioner's sugar
Anhydrous dextrose	Candy floss	Corn sugar (HFCS)
Apple butter	Cane crystals	Corn syrup (HFCS)
Apple sugar	Cane juice	Corn syrup solids (HFCS)
Apple syrup	Cane juice crystals	Corn sweetener (HFCS)
Arenga sugar	Cane juice powder	Cornsweet 90 [®] (really HFCS 90)
Bakers special sugar	Cane sugar	Creamed honey (Often with HFCS)
Barbados Sugar	Caramel	Crystal dextrose
Barley malt	Carob syrup	Crystalline fructose
Barley malt syrup	Caster sugar	Crystallized organic cane juice
Bar sugar	Castorsugar	D-arabino-hexulose
Berry Sugar	Cellobiose	Dark brown sugar
Beet molasses	Chicory (HFCS)	Dark molasses
Beet sugar	Coarse sugar	
Beet syrup	Coconut palm sugar	
	Coconut sap sugar	
	Coconut sugar	
	Coconut syrup	

Date sugar	Glucose-fructose syrup (HFCS)	Jaggery
Decorating sugar	Glucose solids	Jaggery powder
Dehydrated sugar cane juice	Glucosweet	Lactitol
Demerara Sugar	Glucose fructose (HFCS)	Lactose
Dextrin	Golden molasses	Levulose
Dextran	Golden sugar	Lesys
Dextrose	Golden syrup	Light brown sugar
D-fructose	Gomme syrup	Light molasses
D-fructofuranose	Granulated fructose	Liquid dextrose
Diastatic malt	Granulated sugar	Liquid fructose (Often with HFCS)
Diatase	Granulated sugar cane juice	Liquid fructose syrup (Often with HFCS)
Disaccharide	Grape sugar	Liquid honey
Dixie crystals	Grape juice concentrate	Liquid maltodextrin
D-mannose	Gur	Liquid sucrose
Dried evaporated organic cane juice	HFCS	Liquid sugar
D-xylose	HFCS 42	Maize syrup (HFCS)
ECJ	HFCS 55	Maldex
Evaporated organic cane juice	High dextrose glucose syrup	Maldexel
Evaporated corn sweetener (HFCS)	High-fructose corn syrup	Malt
Ethyl maltol	High fructose maize syrup (HFCS)	Malted barley syrup
First molasses	High maltose corn syrup (Often with HFCS)	Malted corn syrup
Florida Crystals	Hydrogenated starch	Malted corn and barley syrup
Free Flowing	Hydrogenated starch hydrosylate	Malted barley
Free flowing brown sugar	Hydrolyzed corn starch	Maltitol
Fructamyl	Honey	Maltitol syrup
Fructose (HFCS)	Honey comb	Malitsorb
Fructose crystals (HFCS)	Honey powder	Maltisweet
Fructose sweetener (HFCS)	HSH	Maltodextrin
Fruit fructose (HFCS)	Icing sugar	Maltose
Fruit juice (Often with HFCS)	Inulin (HFCS)	Maltotriitol
Fruit juice concentrate (Often with HFCS)	Invert sugar	Maltotriose
Fruit sugar (Often with HFCS)	Inverted sugar syrup	Maltotriulose
Fruit syrup (Often with HFCS)	Invert syrup	Malt syrup
Galactose	Icing sugar	Mannitol
Glucodry	Isoglucose (HFCS)	Maple Sugar
Glucomalt	Isomalt	Maple syrup
Glucoplus	Isomaltotriose	Meritose
Glucose	Isosweet	Meritab 700
		Misri
		Mizuame

Molasses	Raisin syrup	Sugar beet syrup
Monosaccharide	Rapadura	Sugar beet crystals
Muscovado sugar	Raw agave syrup	Sugar cane juice
Mycose	Raw sugar	Sugar cane natural
Mylose	Raffinose	Sugar hat
Nigerotriose	Refiner's syrup	Sulfured molasses
Oligosaccharride	Rice maltodextrine	Sweetened condensed milk
Organic agave syrup	Rice Syrup	Sweet sorghum syrup
Organic brown rice syrup	Rice syrup solids	Syrup Syrup
Organic cane juice crystals	Raw honey	Table sugar
Organic coconut palm sugar	Rock sugar	Tagatose
Organic palm sugar	Saccharose	Treacle
Organic sucanat	Sanding sugar	Trehalose
Organic sugar	Second molasses	Tremalose
Organic raw sugar	Shakar	Trimoline
Orgeat syrup	Simple syrup	Triose
Palm sugar	Sirodex	Trisaccharides
Palm syrup	Soluble corn fiber	Turbinado sugar
Panela	Sorbitol	Unrefined sugar
Pancake syrup	Sorbitol syrup	Unsulphured molasses
Panocha	Sorghum	White crystal sugar
Pearl sugar	Sorghum molasses	White grape juice concentrate
Piloncillo	Sorghum syrup	White refined sugar
Potato maltodextrine	Sucanat	White sugar
Powdered sugar	Sucre de canne naturel	Wood sugar
Promitor	Sucrose	Xylose
Pure cane syrup	Sucrosweet	Yellow sugar
Pure sugar spun	Sugar	

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“I Quit Sugar” Synopsis

by FIT members Danielle Ludwick and April Cronce

Since July 1, 2014, my best friend and I embarked on a journey that has changed our lives. We both have our own stories and results and reflections regarding our journeys, but I will let Danielle tell her story. Here is mine...

I grew up in a family that ate “relatively healthy.” Although my mom has ALWAYS struggled with her weight and yo-yo dieting, I was always thin until I started having babies. (Sound familiar?) We have 3 children, and with each child I gained 60 pounds. I would lose at least half of that by breastfeeding, working out, and cutting calories – whether they were good-for-you calories or not.

When I was introduced to FIT, my youngest was 2½ years old. I had lost the weight from the pregnancy his first year, but then gained half of it back by his second birthday. My goal was to lose 20 pounds in my first challenge, but in reality I was scared as to what would happen after the 8 weeks. Would it come back....like always? I participated in three FIT challenges: Sept-Nov, 2013; Holiday Mini-challenge; and Jan-March, 2014. I lost 22 pounds in that first one. I gained 8 back over the Holidays (old habits die hard). I lost that 8 and 2 more in the New Year challenge. I started running consistently. I started eating veggies for breakfast with my eggs. I removed bread (except the occasional Ezekiel bread) from my life. I made countless changes that have become habits.

Why am I telling you all this? Because I still had an addiction.....I love food. But I REALLY love SWEET TREATS. On the 2 challenges that were a full 8 weeks, I didn't just have “A” sweet treat on Sunday. I binged. I ate 2 or 3 servings of homemade Almond Joy Brownie Bites. I would eat 4 BIG homemade blondies. I would eat 7 or 8 homemade chocolate chip cookies. On the non-treat days, I would make homemade Lara bars and would eat 1/3 of the pan. You get the picture. I obviously had a problem. I just didn't know how to fix it. I read Made to Crave. I begged God to show me why I couldn't just eat a serving or a half of serving of something sweet. I didn't understand how my friend could eat oatmeal with absolutely NO maple syrup or honey or fruit mixed in.

I don't remember who the FIT sister was who shared the article, but back in May or June of this year, someone shared an article by Sarah Wilson promoting an 8 week sugar detox and her book called I Quit Sugar. My curiosity was piqued. I read the article, checked out her book from the library, and was incredibly enlightened. WHY didn't I see that before???? In short, the detox gradually eliminates EVERYTHING that contains glucose or fructose. No honey. No pure maple syrup. No fruit. Did you know that sugar is in Lowry's Seasoned Salt? Did you know it is in Mayonnaise? Did you know it was in Worcestershire sauce? That's just the everyday processed items that contain sugar. By week 2, all of that is gone from your diet. For the first 2 weeks, we were allowed LOW fructose fruits (blueberries, raspberries, grapefruit, honeydew). By week 3, NO FRUIT is allowed. Did you know that ONE serving of freshly juiced apple contains 10 grams of sugar? That is the same amount of sugar is in a serving of soda. Did you know that watermelon and bananas and grapes contain as much sugar as a candy bar? Did you know that dates (mmmm, homemade Lara bars) are 70% sugar???

Now I know what you're thinking....“But THOSE are GOOD sugars!!!!” And you are right. HOWEVER, as women, our bodies were created to consume 4-6 grams of sugar a day, no matter what form it is. A medium apple contains 4 grams of fructose. So when we “drown our greens” in salad dressing, pile on the ketchup and mustard and pickles on our soaked-in-Worcestershire- burger wrapped in romaine, and pour jarred spaghetti sauce (4 grams in ¼ cup) over our spaghetti squash, how much sugar are we REALLY consuming each day????

That question haunted me. As Sarah points out in her book, sugar (anything ending in -ose) doesn't tell your brain when you are full. It says, “Mmmm....more please!” So when you eat that romaine-wrapped grass-fed burger with all the

“healthy” toppings, the sugar that was mixed in says, “Now you need some Coconut Oil and Honey CHOCOLATE!” Or, “Now you need some WATERMELON!!!” And those healthy desserts, say, “Mmmmm, I think you can have one more piece. Maybe a little sliver of homemade Larabar before bed.”

THIS was my answer. I love sweets. I love fruit. I love pure honey. (I’ve had 20 pounds of local honey in my pantry for 3 months) I love pure maple syrup – I live in New England after all!!! I love coconut oil chocolate. I’m not a picky eater....especially with something that is remotely sweet. My junk food loving husband who never eats a vegetable will sometimes push a dessert away after 2 bites and say, “That’s too rich for me.” NOTHING...Did you read that?...NOTHING is too rich for this girl.

In I Quit Sugar, she encourages to try the detox as an experiment. “Be kind to yourself,” she reminds the reader. I was determined to try. I had to find SOMETHING to help me on this slippery slope of an addiction. I was tired of Running to Eat (yes, I’m one of those runners). I was tired of losing and gaining the same 20+ pounds. I called my best friend and told her my thoughts. We had just started training for a Half Marathon for November 1, 2014. It was the beginning of summer...peak season for fruit (it HAD to be THIS summer that my family found raspberries and black raspberries in our backyard). But I had to try. I had to experiment. I had to take 8 weeks out of my life and cleanse my palate. I had to. I was tired of being a slave to my salivating tongue.

The last 8 weeks were hard. Did I slip up? Yes, once or twice. Intentionally? No. Was I grumpy as my body “detoxed?” Definitely. Did I feel deprived? You bet your white boots I did. Did I feel left out at baby showers and the BBQ Bash? CHYEAH! Did I feel left out of my own immediate family’s “celebration” times? Of course. Am I glad I did it? Oh yes. A million, tearful yeses. My palate is cleansed. I know that sweet treats TASTE good. But I don’t CRAVE them. I know that first bite of a Sugar High is only there for the first bite. I can stuff my face all I want to....that “high” will not happen again. However, I do crave fruit. I crave blueberries. I crave honeydew and grapefruit. I crave God’s sugar.

On a side note, I wasn’t planning to lose any weight or inches during this detox. I had reached my goal size. My big goal since “taking the FIT training wheels off” has been to maintain. I am Queen of “Twenty pounds on, Twenty pounds off.” Since my last FIT challenge ended in March, my measurements and weight have stayed within a couple pounds/one inch of that challenge. To some, that may be a small accomplishment. For me, THAT IS HUGE!!!!!!!!!! I usually have several different sizes of clothes so that I can dress my ever-changing body size. Not anymore. The purpose of this IQS Detox was solely to cleanse my palate. I wanted to teach my body what to crave and when. Please know that I ate FULL FAT milk and cheese. I found the highest fat content of Greek yogurt that our stores carry. I ate and cooked with coconut oil every day. I ate almonds and pecans and homemade peanut butter ALL the time. I ate a LOT of vegetables (raw, roasted, sautéed) and eggs. I ate a lot of beans and lentils. “Fat doesn’t make you fat. Sugar does.”

Am I going to be an IQS Sarah Wilson "disciple" for life? No. I care for a family of five on a small town Policeman’s wages. However, I am MUCH more aware and in charge of what is going into their bodies. My 9 year old took one full day and asked to Quit Sugar with me. She did so well. She thought she couldn’t have butter that day! “But you said sugar is in EVERYTHING, Mom!!!” I am educating my children on what is good to eat for lunch and snacks. They know now to eat cucumbers and carrots before they think of eating fruit or (Heaven forbid) a cookie for a snack now.

The I Quit Sugar Detox is not for everyone. It is a hardcore mental and physical challenge. Some of you are very new to FIT and you can’t fathom going without chocolate every day much less not being “allowed” to eat fruit. That’s fine. I’m not here to convince anyone to try what I did. I wanted to share my story because there may be a Veteran FIT Sister out there that is searching for something. Maybe you know you’re addicted to sugar by the way you handle the “one sweet treat a week” rule. Maybe you have that last 5-10 pounds you want to lose and you can’t figure out why it won’t come

off. Maybe you HAVE to have something sweet (even “FIT approved”) after a supper full of green veggies and meat. Maybe when you “crave something sweet,” you eat a whole spoonful of honey. Maybe you add 3 handfuls of fruit versus one handful of greens to your smoothie. Maybe you sat out of a challenge to try to “make this a lifestyle” and that scale moved in the wrong direction. Maybe it didn’t move at all. Maybe...just maybe, you should research sugar and experiment as I did. You might be glad that you did. - April Cronic

I Quit Sugar too! April gave you all the facts. Let me tell you what happened to me.

“You want me to quit sugar with you? Ummmmmmmm...”

I had my reservations about this weird agent program that was about to rob me of not only brownies and ice cream, but the fruit from my smoothies and oatmeal. Don’t talk to me about my beloved doughnuts. I’m still grieving. This “I Quit Sugar” testimonial is from the girl who didn’t want to do it, the girl who was convinced it was impossible. This one is for you who are saying, “That’s ridiculous!” Yeah, we’d get along famously.

So, my best friend got all excited about this new book she was reading and she kept texting me and calling me and bugging me about how great it was and how much sense it made. She kept preaching these little sermonettes to me about how much fructose I was consuming and what it was doing to my body and my brain and why. And, at first, I listened and I nodded in agreement and I affirmed her and supported her because I love her and that’s what best friends do. Eight weeks without sugar? Mid-summer? Sigh...I had just eaten four doughnuts in a lonely parking lot because of something stressful happening in my life. She didn’t know about those secret binges. How could I tell her? I KNEW I needed help. I KNEW that getting off of sugar would be a good idea for me. But to tell you the truth, I didn’t really want to give it up. Even though I knew it was the source of A LOT of my problems.

I have recently received fantastic news that my blood work no longer indicates the presence of cancer in my body. I have spent the past year fighting metastatic thyroid cancer. I have no doubt that sugar played a role in my cancer diagnosis. For the past five years, I have been plagued with chronic (almost monthly) vaginal yeast infections. Again, I am convinced that sugar is the culprit. I have been tested for diabetes because I cannot get control of this yeast problem. Quite honestly, I deserve to have diabetes. I love sugar and I eat A LOT of it. There you go. That’s where I’m coming from. Maybe someone can relate. More than likely you’re thinking, “Well, I’m not THAT bad.” But I am. And the doughnut story has played out more times than I care to admit to you gals.

So, I jumped in with both feet and on July 1, 2014 I did not eat sugar. I wanted to. And I was a little bitter about my family’s upcoming 4th of July BBQ and all of the things that I couldn’t have. I made a berry and cheese tray to snack on that day and tried to stay busy caring for the children so that I wouldn’t have to think about all that I was missing. I sulked around for a couple of weeks actually. April and her kids were coming to visit during week four of this stupid endeavor and I was so mad that I couldn’t take her to Toni’s – my favorite family owned ice cream shop that serves the most delicious soft serve raspberry ice cream you’ve ever had. I wanted to go to Starbucks and chat over candied coffees. What were we going to do for fun...for a whole week...without sugar???

I resigned myself to the program and quickly adapted a list of go to foods that I knew were safe and yummy. I’ve pretty much been eating some combination of veggie omelets, sweet potatoes fried in butter, boiled eggs, Ezekiel toast with Greek cream cheese and cucumbers, and oatmeal with pecans for breakfast for the past eight weeks. I eat a lot of raw veggies and snack on nuts and cheese. I learned to eat my salad without dressing and a bit of lemon or lime juice squeezed over top. I have not gone hungry. I have had cravings, but I have not been deprived to the point of hunger. Somewhere during week three the cravings got better. I had suffered with a headache for most of the first week and a

half. I was still irritated about not getting to eat ice cream after Vacation Bible School with the rest of the workers who were being “rewarded” for a job well done. But somehow I felt much more in control. I felt good about myself for making a good decision for my health and sticking with it. April came to visit on week four and I inadvertently fed her Worcestershire sauce and Lowry’s Seasoned Salt. Don’t worry, we’re still friends. We ate good food that week. We ate LOTS of food. We packed lunches and snacks for our daily outings and we took our kids out for ice cream and laughed and talked while they enjoyed their treat. I can honestly say that I did not feel one bit deprived that week. We ate healthy. We ran a 5K together. We stayed up late and got up early to run and I had the energy to do those things because sugar wasn’t bogging me down.

Now listen. I know that this story has a lot of personal details that you don’t give a hoot about. But my personal experience is all I have to pull from and I need to tell you that quitting sugar has changed me for the better. I have a great deal more energy than I have had in years. I’m a better wife and mother when I can keep up with the demands of my family of five without the effects of sugar making me sluggish and unproductive. After eight weeks, I just came through my first monthly cycle in a VERY LONG TIME that was not preceded by a week of misery due to my yeast problem. I’m not done quitting sugar. I have to see if I can get control of this once and for all.

Oh, and one more thing. I’m not tough like my friend is. I DID slip up a time or two or five during the past eight weeks. Most of that was unintentional, (like the seasoned salt and the burger that got switched) but I did cave on purpose a couple of times and was immediately plagued with regret and sickness and MEANNESS!! Yes, sugar makes me mean. If only I could remember that. So, I’m gonna shoot for another eight weeks. I need to see what can happen to my body if I truly make it all the way this time with no cheating. I need to see if I can solve this yeast problem for good. I need to continue to train myself to run to Jesus when I’m stressed instead of looking for comfort in box of doughnuts.

I’m happy to report that during the past eight weeks I lost two and a half inches off of my belly and three inches off of my hips. WOO HOO!!!! I broke through a MAJOR wall with my weight loss and am within ten pounds of my goal weight. I had been STUCK at the same weight for several, SEVERAL weeks. Quitting sugar is not for the faint of heart. It’s not for everyone. I think you’ll know if it’s for you. I think you’ll know when it’s a good time for you to shake up your system and try something a little more intense. If you want to give it a shot, I know two FIT sisters who will be your biggest supporters and would love to share in your journey. - Danielle Ludwick

*The book that we referenced for this experiment is Sarah Wilson's "I Quit Sugar."

Pointers: Eat healthy fats when you crave something sweet. Eat tons of veggies. Then eat some more. Don't quit. Be kind to yourself. Remember....it's an experiment. Oh and eat lots of soluble fiber....beans, oats, green leafy veggies.