

1 Quit Sugar..

* *and got clean*

* *got well*

* *lost weight*

* *became a much
nicer person*

a sweet ebook by
Sarah Wilson

My simple
8-week program
that works. for good.



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This ebook was lovingly designed by Siri, Emily and Anna at seathrustudio.com and put together with the generous help of Jo Foster and Shayne Tilley.

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a short intro

In January 2011 I quit sugar. I'd played with the idea many times before, talked about it and felt guilty about not doing it. But this time I quit successfully.

I consulted dozens of experts and did my own research as a qualified health coach. I read *Sweet Poison* and then interviewed its author *David Gillespie* – some of my thinking is inspired by his work. I experimented, using myself as a guinea pig, and eventually assembled a swag of techniques that worked. Then I got serious and committed.

I'm no white-coated expert. But I *did* succeed in ridding my life of sugar and I *did* experience first-hand what worked and what didn't. Now I want to share what I found and help as many people as I can make the leap. Ergo, this little ebook.

We have a gnarly, deep-rooted resistance to quitting sugar.

We grow up with a full-on emotional and physical attachment to sugar. Just the idea of not being able to turn to it when we're feeling a little lost or tired or bored or emotionally bereft terrifies us.

If not a sweet treat, then what?

Well, I'll tell you what: a mind and body that's clean and clear.

This I Quit Sugar ebook will show you how to take sugar out of your diet and get well. It's a step-by-step guide full of tips, tricks and techniques that helped *me* eliminate the white stuff for good. And that I believe will help the average sugar addict to do the same.

So, what's the bang for your buck here?

Read on for:

- ✱ My tried 'n tested 8-week quit plan
- ✱ The key philosophies and principles for tackling addiction (you'll see these highlighted in italics along the way)
- ✱ A blow-by-blow explanation of why sugar is making you feel crap
- ✱ Recipes for new snacks and breakfast ideas
- ✱ A shopping list of new, better-than-sugar foods.

Be well. And enjoy the process!

Sarah
xx



this much you will soon learn: tea is your friend!



sugar-free fun – the true story!

my story: why I had to quit

I was a sugar addict. I didn't look like one. I didn't drink Coke or put sugar in my coffee. I've never eaten a Krispy Kreme donut, and ice cream bores me.

But here's the thing: I was a covert addict. I hid behind the so-called "healthy sugars" like honey and dark chocolate and... fruit. Which made things harder in some ways because first I had to face my denial.

My attachment started when, as a teenager, I moved into town from the country (where we ate very naturally). A cocktail of girl hormones, newfound access to malls and convenience stores, as well as a kid-in-candy-store delight with foods I'd been previously denied, brought it on. I went sugar crazy.

I remember at university not being able to function if I didn't have a cinnamon scroll at 10am. I loved the pink icing blob in the middle. And convinced myself the dried currents made it healthy.

Over time, this wasn't enough. I'd then eat an apple pie after lunch. And some chocolate. Soon, I was riding a horrible rollercoaster of sugar highs and lows. I was bingeing. Then starving myself the rest of the day.

I got sick off the back of this reactionary eating – very sick. I developed mood disorders and sleep problems and finally I developed adrenal issues and my first autoimmune disease – Graves, or overactive thyroid. Ever since, I've had gut problems linked to bad gut balance.

Over time I swapped my pink-blobbed processed sugary carbs for the "healthy" sugary treats. And, yeah, ate less sugar overall. But all the symptoms above continued. I didn't put it down to sugar *completely*. But I knew it was a major player.

For the past ten years I've eaten very well. But up until seven months ago I was still eating sugar *every* day. After *every* meal. And before bed. I was still addicted.

So how much sugar was I actually eating?

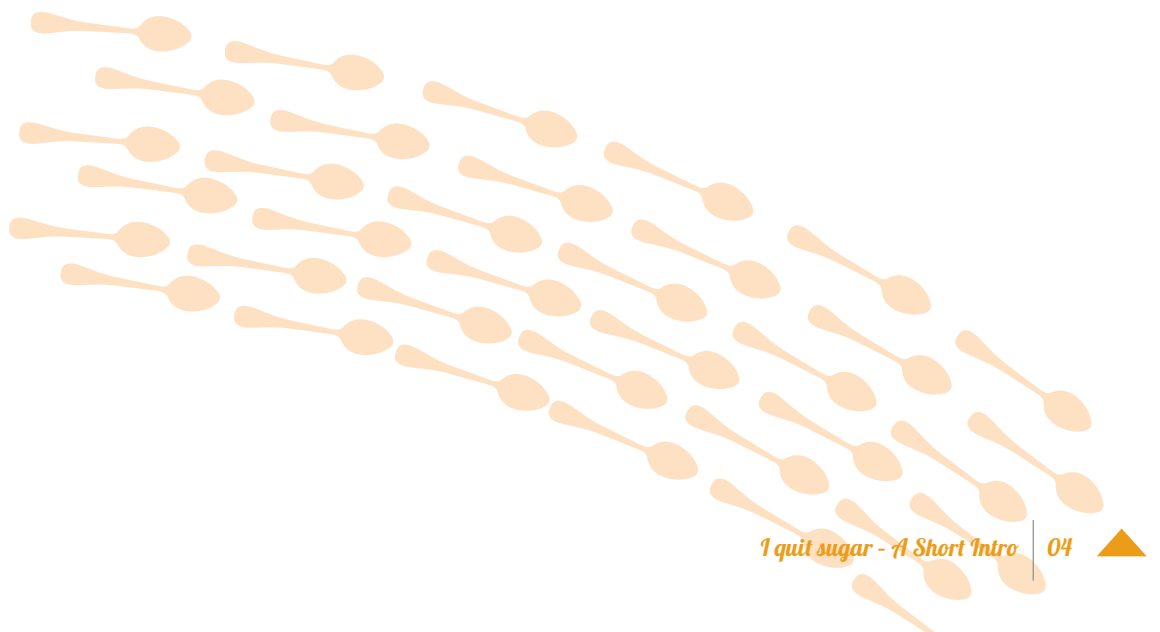
Here's a snapshot: three pieces of fruit a day, a handful of dried fruit in my porridge, a teaspoon or two of honey in my tea, a small (35g) bar of dark chocolate after lunch, and after dinner honey drizzled on yoghurt, or dessert (if I was out).

A conservative day would see me consume about 30 teaspoons of sugar, just in that rundown of snacks above. That's not counting the hidden sugar in things like tomato sauce and other everyday foodstuffs.

I told myself I ate "good" sugar and convinced myself I didn't have a problem.

But as you'll learn in a moment, sugar is sugar. Sure, the other ingredients mixed in with the sugar in, say, a muesli bar or a piece of fruit were good for me. But the chemical composition of sugar – whether it's in a mango or a Mars bar – remains the same.

I was eating
30
*teaspoons of sugar
in an average day*



So what tipped me over? Why did I finally do it?

It was a conflation of reasons:

Reason #1

I was eating way more sugar than we're designed to eat.

Even though I was eating MUCH less sugar than the average Australian and many would say my diet looked very healthy, it was too much.

The American Heart Association recommends that women consume no more than 100 calories a day from added sugar and men take in no more than 150 calories per day. That translates into about six teaspoons for women and nine teaspoons for men, inclusive of hidden sugars.

Australian guidelines vary and are hazy when it comes to defining "added sugar" (does it include the sugar in barbeque sauce or in the fruit added to yoghurt?). The amounts vary from 85-110g a day, which is up to 26 teaspoons. Those who espouse eating sugar at the levels we used to before the "invention of sugar" and it's related chronic diseases in the 1800s suggest 20g (5 teaspoons) a day is the aim. Which ain't much.

Reason #2

I struggled to maintain it at this level.

If someone put a cheesecake in front of me, or a bag of chocolate bullets, or a family-size block of chocolate ... and I was having a weak moment... I'd damn well eat the lot. Once I got a taste, I couldn't control myself.

It was uncool and undignified.

Reason #3

Autoimmune disease (or adrenal issues or an excitable personality) + sugar = bad story

I have an autoimmune disease. I suspect it is – to an extent – linked to my life-long sugar habit. And is certainly made worse by sugar. Anyone with a compromised system simply cannot afford to have their

stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol), nor their neurotransmitter levels (dopamine), nor their insulin levels tipped off balance by sugar. Hard, cold, but oddly motivating fact!

Reason #4

I wanted to lose weight.

I'd put on weight (12kg) from thyroid disease a few years back and hadn't been able to shift it. It wasn't a core issue for me. But it played on my mind. I was keen to see if cutting sugar cut the mustard.

Reason #5

I was bored.

I was over riding the rollercoaster of my sugar highs and lows and my obsession with my next fix. And I figured it was time to at least try eliminating sugar. Just to see what happened.

To be honest I committed to "just trying it out". But after two weeks I felt so much clearer and cleaner I kept going. And going.

I wasn't draconian about it.

I just remained curious...

To see how my body responded. And this is what I really want to share with everyone setting out on this journey...

Treat quitting sugar as an experiment. Not a life sentence.

You don't have to stick with it.

But you might just choose to.

This is a principle I apply to many aspects of my life. Like exercise. I commit to exercising 20 minutes every day (it's the "every day" bit that counts). I don't baulk at the idea of 20 minutes, so I do it without fuss. Plus, once I set out for a jog or a swim for 20 minutes, I get engaged and invariably go for a bit longer. I apply the same psychology to quitting sugar. It works!



I should be eating no more than **6** *teaspoons of sugar/day*



Treat quitting sugar as an experiment. Not a life sentence. You don't have to stick with it. But you might just choose to.



A few things to ponder as you warm up to the idea....

Consider this:

- * We're eating more low-fat food than ever before
- * We're joining more gyms
- * Yet we're putting on more weight

Then consider this:

- * Today we eat more than a kilo of sugar a week. Just 150 years ago we ate next to none.

And this:

- * The low-fat industry is big business
- * Low-fat food often contains more sugar than the whole-food version (sugar is added to make a food taste more like the original)
- * So there is a lot of resistance to eliminating sugar. The sugar and corn industries in many countries are propped up by government tariffs.

A picture forms, right? I don't want to spell things out with outrage and finger pointing. But I will highlight that quitting sugar is something that's not about to be encouraged by a big health initiative any time soon. We have to make the change ourselves, consciously.

Should YOU be quitting?

I don't know. I'm not telling you to do anything. This ebook is just an invitation to try things out. See if it does good stuff for you.

But tell me,

Do you get an energy slump in the afternoon? Do you need something sweet after lunch or dinner?

How's your stomach... bloated much?

Can you seriously eat one piece of cake...and walk away? Or leave a packet of chocolate biscuits in the fridge and only eat one or two at a time?

Are you "podgy" around the middle, perhaps even slim everywhere else? Some time between high school and now you lost your waistline and it's never come back?

Do you often feel unclear? Like you just can't get to what your head is really trying to say?

I ticked "yes to most of the above" and had a sneaking suspicion that sugar might be the thing making me feel baseline-crappy. If you do, too, then you might like to take up the invitation and see if quitting works. It did for hundreds of people who read my blog posts and then took the plunge:

"I eat whatever I want now. I just cut out sugar and my weight (no longer) yo-yos. I don't need to diet or cut back on food, because my weight and appetite is stable since I cut out sugar." *Sue*

"I now don't eat emotionally and my appetite is regular and not all out of whack from all the sugar messing with my insulin etc. I am never hungry or crave foods like I used to when sugar was in my diet." *Pam*

"I have had so many people comment on how well I look, and ask how much weight I've lost. The reality is that I haven't lost much weight at all, but I no longer have that bloating around the face and stomach, which makes my shape much better. I also feel so well – both physically and mentally." *J.G.*

"I've noticed that the kids seem less hungry and quite satisfied at dinner time since I've taken sugar from our diet." *Vanessa*

"I've been sugar-free for about six months and I've lost 12kgs." *John*

"I'm on week 5 and I too am finding that my moods are more stable, bloating has gone and I'm no longer craving it!" *Mia*

"It's been three months and I have lost 7 kilos, gotten rid of my post baby belly and I feel fantastic." *No name provided*

"A week ago I ceased it. All sugar gone. Today (and yesterday too, and the day before that...) I woke up feeling calm. It's life changing." *Liv*

! Please note: this is not a guide suitable for those suffering from fructose malabsorption.

Read this first!

I'll be upfront. There are a few harsh-ish realities to bear in mind:

- * Quitting, I found, took about two months. Studies say it takes between 21 and 66 days to change a habit. Sugar is a gnarly habit; I advise pacing yourself. Do it properly over 8 weeks.
- * When you quit sugar, you quit ALL of it. Fruit, fruit juice, agave and honey included. Some nutritionists advise just cutting out the added sugar. But a lot of the sugar experts agree: it's best to get rid of all of it at

first, so you can break the addiction.

After a few weeks, once my addiction was broken, I found I felt fine to introduce a few pieces of fruit a day back into my diet, as well as some table sugar alternatives. But we'll get to that later.

- * There is a detox period where you will feel like crap. This lasted only a week or two for me. For some it can last 6 weeks. Just sayin'. After that, it's a non-issue. I promise.

So. Enough. Let's plunge in...



How to quit

I scoured the research for about three months. I'm still refining my tricks and techniques. I tried different approaches...but this is what worked for me and for many I've met on my sugarless pilgrimage.

To get started:

- * **Commit to an 8-week "experiment"**. You don't have to commit beyond that if you don't want to. Take this "let's just see" approach and it will make the process less onerous.
- * **Get an IQS mate to do it with you...** it DOES make it easier. Even just to have someone to cook new foods with.
- * **Read + learn** as much information on the science of sugar absorption and sugar politics as you can. It will help remind you of WHY you're doing it, while you're doing it.
- * **Go gently**. Diets don't work, forcing doesn't work. The human experience doesn't respond to "restrictive thinking". I've found that being kind and nurturing with yourself does work. You're doing this, not because you have to, but because it might make you feel better. Be alive to this as often as you can through this process.

- * **Visualise a muscle**. I found it helped to view this process as a strengthening exercise.

Change doesn't happen with an about-face. It happens by building up habits in our minds. Slowly, by flexing regularly, we build new neural pathways in our brains until we're doing things differently, effortlessly. So every day that we flex our "I'm not eating sugar, thanks" muscle, the stronger we get.

Helpful: I'll be mentioning a bunch of different ingredients along the way. Flick to the end of the ebook for the full list and details in The Shopping List.

Every day that we flex our "I'm not eating sugar, thanks" muscle, the stronger we get.



Week 1

Start to cut back

Some experts advise going cold turkey from the outset. Me, not so much. I think it's worth having a little run-up. My theory is that humans respond badly to outright bans. We see a *Wet Paint: Don't Touch* sign – we just want to touch it! Ditto with banning food. We're told to stop eating a certain food – it's all we think about, it's all we want to eat.

Gently. Calmly. That's how we're going to do this.



Do this:

Pare back on sugar and refined carbohydrates (doughnuts, breads and white floury things, etc). Just start to become more conscious and make a few simple swaps:

- * Toast and vegemite instead of toast with jam
- * Eggs on toast instead of muesli and sweet yoghurt
- * Popcorn at the movies instead of a bag of Maltesers

This first week is about a few easy, simple changes that aren't too detailed or complicated, but that get you aware of options. The less sugar in your system before you enter Week 2, the easier it will be. Your gut will be in a better place to deal with the adjustment and the cravings will be milder.

Stick to this experimental "I'm just playing with the idea" phase for 1-2 weeks. Not too long. You don't want to get bored of the experiment.



Let's talk some scientific-al stuff

To be clear – it's fructose that's the enemy.

Not sugar, per se. When I talk about quitting sugar, I'm talking about quitting fructose.

Problem #1: fructose makes us eat more

Now here's the gist of the matter: every molecule we stick in our gobs has corresponding appetite hormones. And when we've eaten enough of said molecule, these hormones tell our brains, "OK kiddo, we're full now. Stop eating." Our bodies are good that way; we're designed to eat only as much as we need.

Every molecule, that is, except fructose.

Odd you might say...

This is because back when we were cave people, sugar was both highly valuable (as insta-energy for chasing wildebeest) and extremely rare (a berry here and there). Thus we evolved with no fructose "full switch". This was so that when we did stumble on a berry bush we could gorge ourselves stupid (and store it as insta-fat).

All very well back when sugar was rare and we had to work hard to get it. But now it's ludicrously abundant and we barely have to extend an arm to get at it. Having no "off switch" is a massive liability!

Problem #2: fructose converts directly to fat

The way fructose is converted in our bodies means it's not used upfront as energy, but converted directly to fat. It also becomes, as David Gillespie says in *Sweet Poison*, "porridge in our arteries", leading to cholesterol and cancer. And the rest.

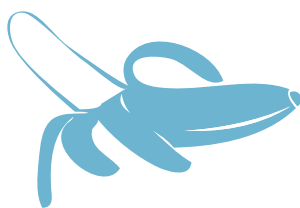
"Eating fructose is like eating fat that your body can't detect as fat...and makes us eat more fat."

– David Gillespie

For more detail on this you really should read **David Gillespie's *Sweet Poison***, and follow him on **Twitter**.



**Table sugar =
50% fructose,
50% sucrose**



**One banana =
about 55% sugar,
over half of
which is fructose**



**Honey =
40% fructose**



**Agave =
often up to 90%
fructose**

