

Ask Leyla: Is there a supplement that can help with my sugar cravings?



Q: I know that too much sugar in my diet is a bad idea, but I get awful sugar cravings, and don't know how to fight them. I want to take steps to lower my sugar intake, and to diminish cravings.

Is there a supplement I can take to help reduce the cravings?

A: First, let's have a frank discussion about sugar. Sugar is the most addictive substance on the planet. We used to think it was cocaine, but sugar has that beat! This is why, as with any addiction, complete avoidance is warranted.



The most effective way to beat sugar cravings first and foremost, is abstinence. You probably don't believe it now, but eliminating sugar entirely can greatly reduce the false hunger we call craving—if you let it. Enough time must pass for cravings to relent, and everyone responds differently. Some experience greatly diminished cravings after just one week of abstinence. For others, it can take several weeks or longer.

Mother Nature knew what she was doing when she gave us sweet taste buds and an affinity for sweet-tasting foods. It's actually a survival mechanism. In warmer weather when fruit was available, our Prehistoric ancestors would eat enough to fatten up, helping to survive any impending famine, like winter. Interestingly, fruit contains the sweetest sugar of all—fructose.

Cravings can present in different ways. Some folks don't crave sweets at all but love bread, pasta, chips or other starchy, processed carbohydrates. Others just love fruit and/or dried fruits and juice, or even milk (lactose is sugar).

But I don't want you to suffer! There are supplements that can help quell cravings during the withdrawal period. In particular, L-glutamine is known to help reduce cravings. There is also evidence it benefits recovering alcoholics in maintaining their sobriety. And we know alcohol is a proxy to sugar.

Because cravings often occur when blood sugar is unstable or low, adding supplemental chromium can help remedy that. A consult with a qualified nutritionist will help assess any blood sugar abnormalities and how to address them with diet and additional supplements as appropriate.

Sugar addiction is real. I've encountered too many clients to count over the years that confess they can't have *just one* cookie (or a slice of bread) without triggering cravings for more.

That actually makes sense when you think about it. Suppose an alcoholic tries to limit him or herself to just one drink a day?

In most cases, it wouldn't work, would it?

To your health!