



Dear team sugar-free,

We're past the halfway mark! This is where things may be getting tough, so thanks for sticking with us. The urge for something sweet is most likely rearing its head now, so this week we're taking a deep dive into the topic of sugar cravings and providing you with some tools and techniques to manage them.

Why do we crave sugar?

If you're used to that extra teaspoon of sugar in your coffee or that sneaky sweet treat when the 3pm slump hits, you may have noticed your body crying out to satisfy its sweet tooth. You see, when we eat sugar, [this causes a rush of dopamine](#) (the feel-good hormone) to our brains, prompting us to want to repeat the behaviour. This is the sugar addiction cycle and one that so many of us find ourselves stuck in. The below diagram sums it up for us.



So how do we break this cycle? One way is to [find natural, healthy ways to enhance our dopamine levels](#). These include getting 10-30 minutes of early morning sunlight, sleeping for at least seven hours a night, keeping physically active and, wait for it, cold showers. The latter may sound scary, particularly as we enter the chilly season, so we've put together a quick guide to get you started:



Of course, other factors also affect our eating patterns and cravings, such as stress, low energy levels and [leptin resistance](#) (the hormone that regulates hunger), which can be affected by excessive sugar consumption. Read our article to [learn more about why we crave sugar and how to curb cravings](#).

Hunger vs craving

Learning to listen to our bodies and distinguish between true hunger and cravings is also key to breaking the cycle of habitual eating.

Ensure you're not skipping meals and are including a source of protein (like eggs, lean meats or tofu), fibre (wholegrains or seeds) and healthy fats (olive oil or avocado) in meals. This will help keep you satiated for longer and help keep your blood sugar levels stable.

Mindful eating as a useful tool

While learning to listen to your body's hunger and fullness cues is important in this journey to better health, it's by no means easy. [Mindful eating is a powerful practice](#) that can help you. The aim is to cultivate a deeper connection between your body and the food on your plate by being fully present during mealtimes and engaging all the senses.

As you pay attention to all the flavours, textures and how the food makes you feel, over time, you'll learn to be more in tune with your body's natural rhythms and break free of unhelpful patterns. Check out this Headspace [video](#) for more.

Your challenge this week

- ✓ Download your [7-day mindful eating guide](#)
- ✓ Aim to practise eating mindfully at least once a day for a week

This week's mini challenge

Use the hunger and fullness scale to help you understand the different levels of hunger and fullness, so you can learn to distinguish between them. The YOUR WORDS column is particularly helpful as it allows you to describe in your own words how you feel when you are at any given number.



Coming up...

Tune in next week for the final round of the *Sugar-free revolution*. We're super excited by this one as we wrap up the last four weeks and prepare you for post-challenge life. Plus, as a special treat, our resident dietitian Ruby shows us how to make some deliciously moreish sugar-free brownies. Yum!

Wishing you sweet nothings,

Team CBHS

Sources:

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