IS SUBSTITUTE NEW TO DESCRIPTIONS

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- Is sugar as addictive as tobacco?
- Is eating sweets/sugar on all occasions an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)?
- Is sugar consumption in excess associated with adverse consequences like in tobacco?
- Does sugar give a rush like tobacco?
- Is sugar a bigger problem than tobacco?

Probably, the answer to all the above questions is yes, he says. With the introduction of refined concentrated sugar in our lives, we have probably lost the taste for the natural sweeteners available. The threshold of sweetness has gone so high that we now don't feel the sweetness of any natural source. Natural sweetness is difficult to

access, but the artificial sugar is available everywhere.

Why eating sugar can be considered an OCD? The answer is very simple: We have become too fond of eating sweets on every occasion, from birth to death. More importantly, if you ask somebody to quit sugar consumption, he/she resists it as vehemently as one does when asked to quit tobacco or alcohol. That means sugar is addictive. The withdrawal symptoms of sugar are as bad as that of tobacco or alcohol. Sugar craving and sugar rush are very well-known entities.

Sugar consumption in excess is supposed to be directly associated with hyperinsulinemia, insulin resistance, obesity and subsequently pancreas exhaustion and can possibly lead to Diabetes Mellitus. The overall health and economic burden of obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome is nothing less than those caused by tobacco.

Why sugar is a bigger problem than tobacco?

- It is easily available
- There are no restrictions
- It is a part of everybody's day to day life
- There is no age limit or age bar for the consumption of sugar
- Sugar and sweet packs are not labelled with warnings
- Hormones, metabolic and systemic complications from sugar are nothing less than tobacco
- The most important aspect is the unawareness of the population towards the complications of sugar.

How is sugar causing problems?

Sugar stimulates the hedonic pleasure centres in the brain and thus has the propensity for compulsion and addiction.

Excessive sugar intake suppresses sex steroids (testosterone, estrogens, progesterone, DHEA, etc) and hence causes adverse effects on overall, sexual and reproductive health. Excessive sugar intake causes a sudden

release of insulin from the pancreas, leading to hyperinsulinemia and subsequent insulin resistance.

- Insulin Resistance is associated with obesity, hyperlipidemia and diabetes.
- Insulin Resistance is also associated with PCOD, hirsutism, skin pigmentation and other aging and aesthetic features.
- Hyperlipidemia is associated with compromised cardiac health.

 Excessive sugar intake also has adverse effects on dental and oral health.

What can the government do?

- Label all the concentrated sugar products to be with warning or caution signs pertaining to Insulin Resistance, diabetes and obesity.
- All the sugar and sweet products should be labelled as potential addictive substances.

 People having sweet cravings should seek medical attention.

How to control sugar cravings?

- First of all, an exaggerated liking for sugar or sweet products should be considered abnormal.
- If the cravings are to the extent that they are disturbing your day to day life, then you should find the probable underlying medical reasons (like hyperinsulinemia, diabetes, low cortisol levels, low growth hormone level, nutritional deficiencies, stress, etc) and get treatment under medical supervision.
- The sugar cravings from an unidentified cause are mainly due to lifestyle and the habit of eating sweets on every occasion (almost daily) and feeling the pleasure of eating sweets.
- The above cases (which constitute most of the population) need to quit sugar by themselves.
 It's a habit they have attained and like any other addiction, they have to quit it by themselves.
- The help of natural sweet products like fruits and honey can be taken.
- Lot of brands of sugar free are available in the market. Their safety is also under question and hence I don't recommend them.
- The taste buds need to be desensitised. You need to develop the taste of natural and organic foods.
- It's all about training your mind. If today, it's about getting pleasure from refined sugar, you can tame it to get the same pleasure through natural and organic foods.

