

# Reduce Sugar & Improve Your Health

In honor of March, which is *National Nutrition Month*, let's talk sugar. The average American consumes 22.2 teaspoons of the sweet stuff each day, which equals 335 empty calories. If you don't exercise them away, these empty, unused calories turn into fat.

According to [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org), people who consume too much sugar also have a 38 percent increased risk of dying from a cardiovascular event. Studies have shown that sugar can be addictive, and withdrawal symptoms can be as intense as nicotine and alcohol.

Here are ways cut your daily sugar intake and improve your health:

- **Start an exercise program.**

Obviously, this will improve your health and you will also get a surge in serotonin, the "feel good" hormone that you get from eating sugar.

- **Say no to fat-free.**

When companies take the fat out, they often replace it with sugar. Full fat snacks, especially those containing Protein, like natural peanut butter, will satisfy you much longer than a quick sugar-filled snack.

- **Improve your sleep habits.**

Stay active during the day so you will sleep better at night. You'll be less tempted to reach for that late-night bowl of ice cream.

- **Keep healthy snacks nearby.**

Good choices include nuts, veggies, hummus or fruit.



**Sources:** [www.clevelandclinicwellness.com](http://www.clevelandclinicwellness.com), [www.health.clevelandclinic.org](http://www.health.clevelandclinic.org), and [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)