

NATURAL HEALTH SERVICES

Keith Post, Naturopathic Physician
13170 SW Barlow Road
Beaverton, Oregon 97008

Telephone: (503) 644-4260
Email: keithpost@frontier.com
<http://naturalhealthservices.info>

Cravings of the Palate vs. Cravings of the Body

By Keith Post, ND

Researchers are now estimating that one out of four Americans will at some point in their lives be diagnosed with diabetes mellitus. The largest majority of these cases will be Type II or adult-onset, which can largely be prevented by controlling diet and lifestyle factors. It used to be the commonly held belief that eating a diet high in complex carbohydrates and low in animal fats was the best approach to preventing and controlling diabetes. It is now understood by many researchers, however, that although complex carbs are certainly preferable to simple carbs (sugars), a diet more similar to our hunter-gatherer ancestors is preferable. This would be a diet consisting of a sufficient amount of high quality proteins, rich in saturated fats and low in carbs, generally speaking.

It has been said that this type of diet leads to a state of ketosis and yes that is true. However, ketosis is not the same biochemical phenomenon as what is referred to as diabetic ketoacidosis. This is a much more extreme state of systemic acidosis and can be life threatening if not corrected promptly.

Ketosis, on the other hand, occurs during fasting or whenever our bodies have switched to burning the long-term fuel supplied by fats as opposed to burning the short-term fuel supplied by carbs. During ketosis, the liver is breaking down the fat stored in the adipose tissues into fatty acids and ketone bodies. This process encourages weight loss, which many type-II diabetics are sorely in need of.

Here is a useful analogy. Burning carbs for energy is like burning kindling, simple sugars are like burning paper and fats are like burning logs. So, carbs get the fire of metabolism going, but for steady energy and stamina, we need plenty of good quality fats and oils.

When done correctly, the loss of adipose tissue does not actually need to translate to a loss in actual weight unless the patient is already morbidly obese. With the inclusion of muscle-strengthening exercises, a conversion of adipose tissue to muscle tissue will actually take place. So, you may lose inches at the waistline and/or hips rather than pounds!

A nutritional approach that I frequently propose to my clients is what has been called the "hunter-gatherer" or "caveman" diet. Basically, it is simply meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, some root vegetables and occasional use of natural sweeteners, i.e. raw honey. Since cave dwellers were mostly nomadic, there were no grains, grain products or dairy foods in their diet yet. This diet is easy to conceptualize, is great to lose weight on and can usually be followed without too much hardship on the patient's part.

In the past, sugary sweet foods were only affordable to people in aristocratic and merchant classes. The common people, who usually held positions involving lots of manual labor, have

traditionally eaten rather simple fare. However, as long as there was enough nutritional content in their diet they would thrive, while the rich would typically succumb to all of the so-called degenerative diseases, i.e. arthritis, gout, consumption and diabetes. This scene has been played out repeatedly over most of the stages of the world. Opulence appears to lead to dietary indiscretions, which then begets disease.

People who do hard manual labor do not even want sugary sweets after they feel the after-effects a few times. They cannot afford to experience the fatigue and tiredness that is felt soon after the “sugar rush” is over. Those who live close to Mother Nature are often especially in tune with what I often refer to as “cravings of the body,” as opposed to “cravings of the palate.”

Body cravings are based on the intuition that all living creatures share guiding them to the foods or herbs containing whatever nutrients they may be currently lacking. This is why a cow or other domestic animal may occasionally be seen chewing on a bush, rock or fence. This may also be part of the reason for pica. Pica is the term used for when a human child is observed chewing or eating indigestible objects of some kind. You may have even seen a child pop an insect into their mouth on occasion, perhaps for its’ high protein content.

Cravings of the palate, however, are perversions of the normal biological urge to satisfy one’s true nutritional needs. Where do these cravings come from? Psychologists have identified the ages zero through seven as the most formative years and this is where the family environment plays a crucial role. It is during this time that nutritional likes and dislikes are also developing, often in similarity to the tastes of the family and ethnic culture of the family.

Many cultural foods are extremely healthy and adaptive to the climate of the culture. For example, various corns, beans and spices that are heating and anti-parasitic are very prominent in the hot, dry climate of Mexico and Latin America. This diet will give them strength, stamina, motivation and keep them healthy. In Asia, we see the mainstays as being rice, fish and fermented foods and sauces, a diet that has the benefit of supporting the thyroid glands of these very active and industrious people. In the Midwestern states of the USA, beef and wheat play a huge role and is perhaps the reason that Midwesterners are known for their strength, athleticism and placid nature.

Unfortunately, in many cultures, sweet sugary foods are often used to habitually reward small children for good behavior, and perhaps sometimes as a substitute for genuine physical affection, which Maslow has proven to be essential to normal emotional development. This may not have been such a problem at times when sweets were relatively scarce or consisted of such natural sweets as raisins or dried fruits. Plus, at one time, you had to be little crazy to want to invade a beehive for some raw honey.

So, if as a child you were given free access to sugary sweets and the ultimate sweet of all, the soft drink, chances are that you have totally lost touch with your natural cravings and are now a slave to the cravings of your palate. In that case, it may take a disease crisis and a lot of will power to make the changes necessary to save your kidneys, eyes, legs, etc. The good news is that as long as you are still alive, it is never too late to do so.

Meanwhile, parents should be up in arms that their children’s schools are now allowing coin-operated vending machines dispensing junk foods loaded with refined white sugar and white flour, such as soda pops, cookies and candy. These machines have no place in the schools and these junk foods should have a very small role in childhood nutrition if our goal is to see them grow up to have healthy bodies and minds.

Notice that I just mentioned healthy minds? It is estimated by some nutritional researchers that over 80% of all so-called mental diseases basically disappear when a healthy diet is introduced and access to junk foods are limited. Certainly, hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder would be reduced to almost nothing if these sugary junk foods were eliminated. A current trend that is most alarming is the treatment of school-age children with anti-depressant medication. This is often done without fully taking into account the diet of the child. Even more alarming is the fact that some doctors, often without psychiatric training, are writing prescriptions for stimulants such as Ritalin to treat so-called “hyperactivity” or “attention deficit disorder” without provisions for ongoing evaluations, counseling therapies or attention to the educational environment.

So, where did sugar come from? Many centuries ago, it is thought that Polynesian Islanders learned how to squeeze sugarcane for the thick rich dark brown-colored cane syrup, which could then be used as a natural sweetener or for cooking purposes. A later development was the use of dehydration techniques to yield a crystalline form of raw sugar. Some types of raw sugar being made today include demerara, muscovado, sucanat and turbinado.

Dr. Weston Price, a famous dentist turned anthropologist, noticed that in traditional Polynesian culture, the children ate plenty of sweets made from the raw cane. Despite this, their teeth remained strong and free of cavities, as long as they adhered to their native diet. For more information about the research and legacy of Dr. Price, visit <http://www.westonaprice.org>.

White sugar or pure sucrose is the original “junk food” ingredient and there is nothing natural about it. Chemical processes are often used to remove the molasses, which is the mineral-rich portion of the cane syrup. Blackstrap molasses, which is the result of the third and final boiling of the cane syrup, is a significant source of the nutrients calcium, magnesium, potassium and iron. Commercially, molasses is used mostly in livestock feeds, in the manufacture of rum and some beers and by bakers in recipes such as gingerbread cookies.

When white sugar is consumed in significant quantities, it has a drug-like activity on the metabolism of the body. There are no positive reasons to consume white sugar on a regular basis and sugar has been linked as a contributing agent to many diseases. Some of these include:

- Cardiovascular diseases such as atherosclerosis, high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol
- Conditions of impaired immune system function such as frequent colds and flu, bacterial sinusitis, asthma, systemic candidiasis and increased risk of cancer (sugar also feeds cancers that are already present in the body)
- Calcium deficiency syndromes such as osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, tooth decay, periodontal disease and other dental problems
- Mental conditions such as hyperactivity in children, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, personality changes and mental illness
- Metabolic diseases such as gallstone formation, diabetes, kidney disease and obesity.

Without the presence of the minerals contained in the molasses portion, the body responds by triggering the endocrine portion of the pancreas to immediately secrete a significant dose of insulin in an effort to control the amount of glucose flooding into the bloodstream and heading towards the brain. If there is also significant obesity, insulin uptake may become compromised.

So, even though the pancreas may still be able to release insulin in response to glucose challenges, the body is unable to keep the blood sugar fully under control. Eventually, however, the pancreas will become exhausted and insulin production will decline. At that point, the blood sugar will climb to dangerous levels and stay there until drastic changes in diet and lifestyle are taken. This is adult-onset diabetes mellitus, Type II.

Depression seems to be rampant these days. Here are some facts. There are nutritional deficiencies, but there will never be such a thing as an “anti-depressant” deficiency. The body makes all of the necessary neurotransmitter chemicals it needs, as long as it is supplied with a steady stream of quality nutrition. Brain function is highly dependent on essential amino acids and the best and most reliable source for several of these are animal-derived proteins.

By the way, the brain is also extremely rich in cholesterol, as are the adrenal and sex hormones. So, I consider low cholesterol diets to be the epitome of insanity, unless you want to people to be weak-minded, impotent or infertile. The cholesterol story has been totally perverted by the influence of the pharmaceutical industry, which heavily funds most research. The normal range for total serum cholesterol has been lowered at least twice in the last fifty years for no discernibly rational justification. The only number still worth watching is the HDL-Cholesterol or “good cholesterol”, which is best if above 40.