

Our Year of No Sugar: One Family's Grand Adventure



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(Stormy Beginning) **Once upon a time, I was healthy; at least I thought I was.** Sure, I lacked enough energy to get me through the day, but with all the commercials on TV touting energy drinks for tired masses, I always assumed I wasn't the only one suffering. At least, that's what I thought until I heard some disturbing new information about the effects of sugar. **According to several experts, sugar is the thing that is making so many people fat and sick. The more I thought about it the more this made sense to me — a lot of sense.** (Thesis)

A Bright Idea

I took all of this newfound knowledge and formulated an idea. I wanted to see how hard it would be to have our family —my husband, our two children (ages 6 and 11), and me, — spend an entire year eating foods that contained no added sugar. We'd **cut out on** anything with an added sweetener, be it table sugar, honey, molasses, maple syrup, agave or fruit juice. We also excluded anything made with fake sugar or sugar alcohols. Unless the sweetness was attached to its original source (e.g., a piece of fruit), we didn't eat it.

Once we started looking, we found sugar in the most amazing places: tortillas, sausages, chicken broth, salad dressing, cold cuts, crackers, mayonnaise, bacon, bread, and even baby food. Why add all of this sugar? To make these items more palatable, add shelf life, and make packaged food production ever cheaper.

Call me crazy, but avoiding added sugar for a year struck me as a grand adventure. I was curious as to what would happen. I wanted to know how hard it would be, what interesting things could happen, how my cooking and shopping would change. After continuing my research, I was convinced removing sugar would make us all healthier.

A Sugar-Free Year Later



It was subtle, but noticeable; the longer I went on eating without added sugar, the better and more energetic I felt. If I doubted the connection, something happened next which would prove it to me: my husband's birthday. Capture11

During our year of no sugar, one of the rules was that, as a family, we could have one actual sugar-containing dessert per month; if it was your birthday, you got to choose the dessert. By the time September rolled around we noticed our palates starting to change, and slowly, we began enjoying our monthly "treat" less and less.

(Conclusion) Now that our year of no sugar is over, we **will** occasionally indulge, but the way we eat it is very different. We appreciate sugar in drastically smaller amounts, avoid it in everyday foods (that it shouldn't be in in the first place), and save dessert for truly special occasions. My body seems to be thanking me for it. I don't worry about running out of energy. And when flu season comes around, no longer do I feel somehow the urge to go and hide with my children under the bed. But if we do come down with something, our bodies are better equipped to fight it. **We get sick less and get well faster. Much to my surprise, after our no-sugar life, we all feel healthier and stronger. And that is nothing to sneeze at.** (Terminating Statement)