

Blood Sugar Thoughts...

Blood sugar problems are a combination of excessive stimulants and stress. There are two ways to increase your blood sugars; one is to eat more glucose and the other is to increase your levels of stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol. To raise the stress hormones there are two ways; consume a stimulant, tea, coffee etc or react stressfully to a situation. If you understand this it is easy to understand how easy it is to become caught up in a cycle of stress, sugars and stimulants. Much of the time it will leave you feeling depressed, tired and stressed most of the time. This happens because you lose control of your blood sugars and each morning wake up with low blood sugars and not enough adrenaline to kick start your energy levels. You then either start the day with a stimulant or no breakfast which starts the cycle and will have a negative effect on your mood.

Caffeine makes people feel energised, alert and generally better. However, it is addictive and the result of caffeine is a response to the withdrawal rather than a positive benefit. People who drink more than 5 cups of caffeine a day are found to have higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as lower memory and academic performance, than those who abstain from caffeine (American Journal of Psychiatry – 1,500 people studied).

Caffeine blocks the receptors for a brain chemical called adenosine, whose function is to stop the release of the motivating neuro transmitters called dopamine and adrenaline. The more caffeine and stimulants you rely on, the less your body will naturally produce, so you need to rely on more stimulants to keep 'energised'.

Caffeine Levels in Products

Coca Cola Normal & Diet	46mg	Filter Coffee	150mg
Red Bull	80mg	Starbucks Grande	500mg
Instant Coffee	105mg	Strong Tea	100mg
Coffee – latte, cappuccino	50mg	Green Tea	30mg
Filter Coffee	150mg	Chocolate Cake	30mg

(Patrick Holford pg93- Optimum Nutrition Bible)

Kicking the Habit

If you would like to stay in good long term mental and physical health it is best to stay away from stimulants. This is much easier said than done if you have been dependant on them for a long period of time.

Coffee has three stimulants with the strongest being caffeine – the effect is disturbed sleep patterns, headaches and tiredness if an individual does not have it regularly. However, if try to cut down 2 cups a week within a month you should not be reliant on coffee and begin to feel much better. The same applies for coca cola and red bull, these contain almost as much caffeine and sweeteners etc – not good for stable blood sugars. Alternatives to coffee are all herbal teas and some more alternative ones called Caro Extra and Bambu which are thought to replicate the taste of coffee.

A strong mug of tea has as much caffeine as a regular mug of coffee. It also contains tannin which interferes with the absorption of iron and zinc. Earl Grey contains an extra stimulant called Bergamot. The best alternative for tea is Rooibosch and fruit teas.

A small amount of good quality chocolate does no harm, however lots of cheaper chocolate will unsettle your blood sugars and give you a similar reaction to caffeine. The best way to quit is to have no chocolate at all and try and balance your sugar intake by avoiding any high GI foods. After two weeks of hard discipline you will no longer crave chocolates at all.