

Practical Preventable Medicine



SUGAR, FAT, SALT A DAMAGING ADDICTION

The headline ran “An Australian loses a limb every 2-3 hours as a result of diabetes.” That’s huge, yet the subject of our sugar and highly processed carbohydrate diets is something we continue to ignore. So why can’t we stop? There is now scientific evidence of something that the fast food chains have known for years. The right ratio of sugar fat and salt in high amounts are addictive. And I mean really addictive in much the same way as cocaine or any other addiction. We as consumers have been manipulated by advertising and gimmicks to purchase foods for ourselves and our children that creates a release of dopamine in the brain that makes you feel good and want more, and more and more. In his book “The End of Overeating”, David A Kessler investigates the reasons why some people are literally unable to resist the cakes, chocolate and chips that keep the battle with their healthy weight a distant dream. The layering of sugar on sugar on fat, sugar and salt (such as a doughnut which is oil and white flour salt and sugar, then fried in oil and then coated with sugar) is literally disguising a dopamine bomb that when you really think about it, is a huge amount of nutrient empty calories.

Think about the last junk food fest you indulged in, it may have been along the lines of potato chips (fat, salt and carbohydrate which converts to sugar), chocolate (also sugar, fat a dash of salt) and soft drink (sugar). Such a huge burden on the liver that not only sends you blood sugar levels on a massive high, only to be followed by a massive low during which you crave more.....sugar, fat and salt. Not much different from an alcohol bender when it comes to the impact on your body if the behaviour is repeated, especially when it begins at such a young age and thus sets the scene for a cravings that become termed as ‘comfort food’ that becomes a tough addiction to break.

What can we do? Like any addiction begin by becoming aware of what you are eating. Look at all of the foods you buy and check the content of fat, sugar and salt and avoid as much packaged food as possible. Cook your own biscuits, chop and serve fresh fruit as snacks and see how quick a fruit platter disappears. Drink water and herbal teas and eat whole unprocessed grains. The more a food is processed, the more sugar-like it becomes, and then fat and salt is added to give the food the body that has been removed. And finally vary your food, variety is the spice of life so spice it up and let the world of flavour entertain your senses and help you free yourself, for example cinnamon is great tasting on your brekkie with a little banana, reduces the need for sweetener and assists in regulating Blood sugar levels and keeps your blood warm too, and a squeeze of lemon juice over steamed veggies reduces the need of salt. Most importantly, we need to stop using sugar to reward our children, there are so many ways and often love and play are the best rewards. Running about playing chase releases more endorphins than sugar and with our sedentary school system, this is so important. So get rid of sugar and watch out for our screening of ‘**What’s With Wheat**’ coming up next month.

Written by: Dr Angela Palmer - Kinglake Chinese Medicine
Chinese Medicine CMRBV REG AH/1347
Member AACMA 2154

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Until next time

Stay well Dr Angela Palmer Chinese Medicine

Dr Angela Palmer

T.C.M. B.App.Sc.

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