

Your Body on a Junk Binge

Inhaling sugary or fatty carbs may give you a temporary high, but what are the other short-term effects of one too many cookies? Here's what happens in the first few hours after you overdo it.

1. MOUTH

Eating sugary, fatty processed foods creates more saliva. The more saliva, the better food tastes, increasing your likelihood of overeating.

2. TEETH

The more junk you eat, the more sugar clings to teeth and reacts with bacteria to produce enameldamaging acid.

3. GUT

Refined carbs break down into sugar more quickly than other foods, so blood glucose peaks quicker, within 45 minutes.

4. BRAIN

The blood sugar boost causes a surge in mental energy while stimulating "happy" hormones like dopamine that trigger calm and contentment.

5. BLOOD

After excess sugar is used or stored, blood glucose and insulin drop, causing sugar cravings and hunger.

6. LIVER & MUSCLES

When there's no more room for glycogen in the liver and muscles—that's where unused blood sugar is stored—it's converted to body fat.

BREAK THE CYCLE!

Eat protein- and fiber-rich meals and snacks that control blood sugar, not sugary stuff that perpetuates the cycle. Think: apple with peanut butter or grilled chicken salad with brown rice.

Sources: Jessica Fishman Levinson, RDN; Steven A. Witherly, PhD; Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology

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