**Give up Sugar and Processed Foods – Are you crazy?**

I’ve known several people who have given up sugar and they rave about the great health improvements they’ve experienced. I’m sure they are perplexed by the “are you crazy” look I give them. I just can’t imagine giving up sugar, especially because I think my body craves it. However, the more I research, the more I’m convinced that giving up sugar is exactly what I need to do (although it hurts my fingers to type those words!).

100 years ago, people ate about 90 pounds of sugar per **year**. Today, 50% of American’s eat ½ pound per day or **180 pounds** of sugar per **year**. Why the increase? Because sugar is everywhere and carefully disguised. Take a look at the sugar content of your flavored yogurt. Suddenly your health food is not so healthy. Sugar is in most processed foods ranging from pretzels, soft drinks, sports drinks, bologna, baby formula and ketchup.

What would make a diehard sugar addict like me even toy with the idea of greatly reducing or better yet, giving up my sugar filled ways? These are just a few things about sugar that really hit a chord with me.

1. Lowers your immunity. Refined sugar cause a significant decrease in white blood cell activity. Brownies caused a 60% decrease in immune function.
2. Feeds cancer.
3. Feeds candida.
4. Ages you! Wrinkles, connective tissue and organ functions are all impacted by Advance Gycloslytic
5. Weight gain (due to the empty calories). Obesity is epidemic. 100 years ago 3.4% of American’s were obese. Today 32% are obese. Obesity rates in children make this generation one of the first predicted to die before their parents.
6. Contributes to the rise in Type 2 Diabetes. 100 years ago, 3 people in 100,000 had diabetes. Today 8,000 people out of 100,000 have it.
7. Addictive.
8. Cause inflammation in the body.
9. Increases the risk of osteoporosis by mineral imbalances.
10. Elevate triglycerides.
11. Makes blood more acidic – you want your body to be more alkaline.
12. Cause hormonal imbalance and more.

For a comprehensive 76 Dangers of Sugar article go to <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2010/04/20/sugar-dangers.aspx>.

Everyone knows that High Fructose Corn Syrup is bad for you. Start reading labels and you will be amazed at all the foods it is in. Get big words out of your food too. If you don’t know what the first 4 ingredients are, then don’t eat it. Avoid artificial sweetners as well as they are very dangerous to your health and your waistline.

The typical diet today is made up of 55% “new” foods – cereal, grains, sugar, processed foods, treats, etc. Avoid the center of the supermarket to avoid many of these “new” foods. Most of these foods were created in the last 50 years. Another issue with processed foods is they contain lots of Omega 6s. Many people think all Omegas are good for you, however, Omega 6 is responsible for inflammation in your body.

The costs of disease are staggering. Obesity =$ 100 billion. Diabetes = $150 billion. Cancer = $200 billion. Heart disease = $300 billion.

So the evidence is overwhelming that I need to greatly reduce or give up sugar and processed foods. I don’t intend to do it cold turkey and unfortunately for my family, I’ll have to take them along for the journey. Afterall, I’ve inherited the “hide the candy” gene from my mother! I’ll share my struggles and successes with this challenge – after I get back from vacation. I’m not that crazy!