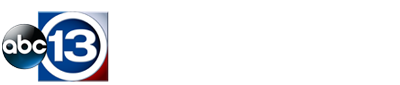
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STUDY: SUGAR HIDDEN IN JUNK FOOD EIGHT TIMES MORE ADDICTIVE THAN COCAINE

TRK

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A junk food addiction is a lot more like a drug addiction than researchers previously thought. They now claim sugar is eight times more addictive than cocaine.  
  
Dr. Nicole Avena of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai tells [The Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/23/food-addiction_n_6709756.html?utm_hp_ref=healthy-living" \t ") that pizza is the most addictive food by far due to the hidden sugar you'll find in just once slice. The tomato sauce on the pizza, for example, can have more sugar than a few Oreos.  
  
Other extremely addictive foods are chips, cookies and ice cream.  
  
Cucumbers are the least addictive food, followed by carrots and beans.  
  
Dr. Avena found behaviors and attitudes toward some foods closely mirror addiction patterns. The most addictive foods are the ones which are high on the glycemic index.   
  
"Several studies really do suggest that highly-palatable, highly-processed foods can produce behaviors and changes in the brain that one would use to diagnose an addiction, like drugs and alcohol," Avena says.   
  
Cardiologist Dr. James O'Keefe says sugar contributes to cardiovascular disease, as well as liver disease, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and Alzheimer's disease.  
  
"When we eat wheat flour and sugar in processed foods, spikes our sugar, then insulin. Those are the hormonal disturbances that make you store belly fat, and then you are hungry for more sweets and starchy junk food," O'Keefe told [KCTV](http://www.kctv5.com/story/28177898/the-other-white-poison-sugar-as-addictive-as-cocaine-study-says" \l "ixzz3SkNF6Igp" \t ").  
  
O'Keefe says it can take six weeks to kick a sugar addiction, and you can experience strong cravings almost like a drug withdrawal. But he says the long term benefits are worth it.  
  
"Blood pressure comes down, diabetes goes away, obesity goes away, complexion clears up, mood clears up, sleep improves. It is really, really striking," O'Keefe told[KCTV](http://www.kctv5.com/story/28177898/the-other-white-poison-sugar-as-addictive-as-cocaine-study-says" \l "ixzz3SkNF6Igp" \t ").  
  
So what should you eat? O'Keefe recommends a "back to the basics" diet.  
  
"Lots of vegetables, lots of fruits and nuts, berries and fish, chicken breast and water and sparkling water," O'Keefe said. "I'll tell you they are not happy. Had to get rid of cereal, Pop Tarts and crackers."

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