

Beauty report

Sickly sweet

Since she was a little girl, Kate Chapple found happiness at the bottom of a sweet jar. But through a haze of fatigue, dizziness and pre-diabetes, she realised that the sugar had turned sour. Here, she charts her journey out of candyland

I still can't quite believe I'll never eat a sweet again. But it's true. I've been deprogrammed, forever. My addiction to refined sugar – mainly Seventies-style confectionery – had got so out of hand that I wasn't really eating anything else by the end.

Admittedly, I did manage some real food for breakfast

and lunch, but come teatime I was off and away: two packets of Black Jacks and Fruit Salads, minimum, with a few Love Hearts and Refreshers thrown in for adventure, followed later by a supper of, say, American Hard Gums, Pineapple Chunks, Strawberry Licorice Whips (far superior in taste to stupid straws or laces), Banana Mallows and Sherbet Lemons, all mixed together in a dinky retro tin. These would be washed down with a couple of cans of Coca-Cola, surely God's own drink.

Then, of course, there were Soothers. I could eat as many packets of those as I wanted, any time of the day... because they're medicine, see, not sweets at all. Besides, you never know when you might suddenly be trapped in a lift or Tube train for hours and then you could ration them around and

maybe save some lives. Or so the excuses went...

No one could eat sweets like I could. I've met people along the way (we're talking several decades here) who came fairly close, but none of them was able, like me, to crunch their way through a whole quarter-pound of pear drops. My younger sister almost had the knack. We both learnt how from an early age. In fact, we spent most of our colonial childhood trying to sneak into the kitchen without being noticed and climb to the top of the fridge as fast as possible to grab as many sweets out of the tin as our trembling little hands would hold.

It didn't matter to us that there was just the one type of sweet available in those days: the rock-hard, tooth-uprooting, jawbone-rotting boiled kind. We had acquired a taste for them, just as you do for any food you eat regularly. Officially, we were allowed two a day, after lunch. But two was never enough.

Perhaps if we'd sucked them as you're supposed to, we would have a few less crowns on our teeth today (or indeed titanium implants). But because we were always in such a state of panic climbing down from that fridge and out of the kitchen, we would shovel them in, bite them as hard as we could and gulp them down. The habit stuck. By the time I was a teenager, I could destroy a gobstopper in seconds.

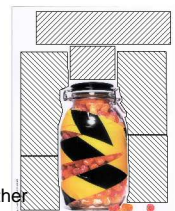
Stuck in a strict convent boarding school for years, from the age of nine, I could only get that candy comfort by writing constantly to the confectionery manufacturers to complain about – shock horror – a misshapen sweet I'd come across in one of their packets, knowing they'd send a huge cardboard box stuffed with their whole wonderful

range. Instant popularity, as well as the sugar high that always reminded me of my little sister... and home, thousands of miles away in the Far East (where, by the way, the local sweets were – and still are – horrible).

Right up to the time I was freed forever from my fast-sugar addiction, aged fortysomething, I was still writing those letters, the last one expressing outrage that a packet of my beloved Rowntree's Fruit Gums had 11 yellow ones inside and, like, no red or black ones at all. I got a cheque for £2. Rubbish.

It was all getting too much. Even I couldn't deny how much my tolerance for the drug had grown. Along with my hips.

But it wasn't until I started to have frequent dizzy spells that I came to my senses. I'd be sitting ▷



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<I at my desk trying to work when the room would start reeling. It was the early stages of Type 2 diabetes, as confirmed by my doctor. (She called it 'pre-diabetes', which is a grey area between having it and not.) My pancreas had had to produce so much insulin over the years to metabolise the sugar pouring into my body on a daily basis that it had almost run out of stock. It can happen to anyone who eats lots of refined sugar every day.

The thing is, refined sugar is so much easier to binge on than natural sugar because it generally has no fibre and it's the fibre in natural sugar that fills us up (and slows down the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream). You can go on and on and on eating refined sugar – scary quantities of it, believe me – and still feel empty. That's the insecurity created by the drug, which, like all drugs, leaves you feeling deprived if you don't get some more. What a con trick. More is the last thing we need.

More may mean an increased risk of not only diabetes but gooey arteries, calcium-leached teeth and bones (speaking of which, the white coloration of table sugar comes about by filtering it at the refineries through cow or pig bone... yum!), a suppressed immune system, cancer, cardiovascular something-or-other. It can also affect our ability to remember stuff, or even do simple calculations, which sounds a bit mad but, judging by how bad I am at maths, seems to be true. (I once wrote a caption for *Country Life* magazine that read 'A 60-foot Galapagos tortoise', because metric had to be converted into imperial and I evidently had difficulty rounding it off.)

Oh, and let's not forget fatigue, the kind of fatigue that causes many refined-sugar addicts to sit around watching TV most nights, storing fat because none of the energy provided by the sugar we just ate is being used, while all along we are being bombarded by amazing adverts pushing sugar on us like our life depended on it, even though the truth is the complete opposite. Look what they've done to the nation already. And we're supposed to be the greedy ones... Hmm.

So I did what I always do to rid myself of a bad habit once and for all, the same thing I did with nicotine and alcohol: I popped along to the [Allen Carr Easyway to Stop Smoking/Drinking/Overeating clinic](#) in

SW20. Why on earth bother with all those other methods when there's one this easy, hey. You don't even have to *want* to stop. All it takes is an open mind. That's it. The rest is done for you, while you sit back in a big comfy chair that has three different levels of recline, the most horizontal of which is used for the 20-minute hypnotherapy bit at the end of a five-and-a-half-hour seminar that changes the way you think about the drug, permanently.

It will never occur to me again to put nicotine, alcohol or, in the Easyway's words, 'sweet forms of refined sugar – that's pastries, puddings, biscuits, cakes, fizzy drinks, chocolate, confectionery' into my system. It just won't cross my mind. What's more, I can happily be around nicotine, alcohol and refined sugar for the rest of my life free from temptation,

because I have been 'deprogrammed from the brainwashing' that leads us to believe these toxins taste good. We simply don't have any choice. We are hooked. This is what the Easyway does: it gives us back our free will by eradicating the existence of craving. It is the drugs that are addictive, not our personalities. Phew.

The Easyway to stop eating refined sugar (part of the Easyweigh to Lose Weight session, which can be used to overhaul all your eating habits, not just sugar) or taking any drug, for that matter, involves the same central argument: we are slaves to these substances. And we feel the remorse of being a slave every time we experience the slump that follows the rush. Trouble is, we're 'born addicted to sugar', according to the Easyway. Apparently, it all started with a crystallised tulip given to Henry VIII (who's thought to have had the chronic symptoms of untreated diabetes in later life). The Tudors loved sugar, but for centuries only aristocrats could afford it. By the time the common man got a taste for sugar, it was the overmanufactured, empty-caloried, nutritionally naked, refined kind (easier to export in bulk from the West Indies).

Incidentally, in 1929, on a sugar plantation in Panama, the codiscoverer of insulin,

Sir Frederick Banting, observed that there

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was no diabetes among the cane-cutters, who chewed on only the raw cane, but plenty of it among the plantation owners, who feasted on the refined product, stripped of all its minerals. They could have informed us of the dangers of ingesting refined sugar almost a century ago... but first they'd like to teach the world to drink the Real Thing.

The dealers in refined sugar, alcohol and nicotine can't get to me now. I'm safe. The Easyway has shown me that it is the belief that we need these products that hooks us, not really any physical dependency as such. That's why it can be undone – and so easily.

The change is profound. For starters, my figure, though still curvy, is a good dress size smaller. I have lost two stone nice and slowly over six months, not like the two stone I lost in under three weeks after I stopped drinking, which I soon put back on with Coca-Cola. When I did find myself substituting sweets with white bread (our bodies respond to white-flour products as though they were sugars), I just went back to the Easyway clinic for a short top-up session (at no cost) in which I was freed from that too.

As for my blood-sugar reading now... it's 'perfect', according to my doctor (but I shall keep a regular check on it). My complexion is much brighter, my energy levels are surprisingly high (my long daily bike ride to and from work is much less of a slog) and, most significant of all, I no longer experience that peculiar low I always thought was me. Little did I know it was the refined sugar taking me down, way more than the depressant alcohol ever could. It's great to feel so joyful now, like a kid who's never even heard of a candy store.

I snack on loads of raw vegetables these days (the Easyway enables you to learn to enjoy healthy food) – and I eat only natural sugar. Tons of it! Fruit has become as exciting as sweets ever were, bright colours everywhere. I mix them up together, squeeze limes all over them for adventure, and wonder if there's someone to write to about misshapen pineapples... □

An *Allen Carr Easyweigh to Lose Weight* session costs £220. Ring 020 8944 7761 or visit allencarr.com

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