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Health News



Raging Hormone

It's no surprise that when you are hungry (say, after skipping a meal), you're more likely to reach for a sweet. But did you know why? This is because of ghrelin, a hormone that sends "time to eat!" messages to the brain. In fact, ghrelin sends out similar signals even if you have already eaten.

In experiments at the MRC Clinical Sciences Centre at the Imperial College London, a group of 18

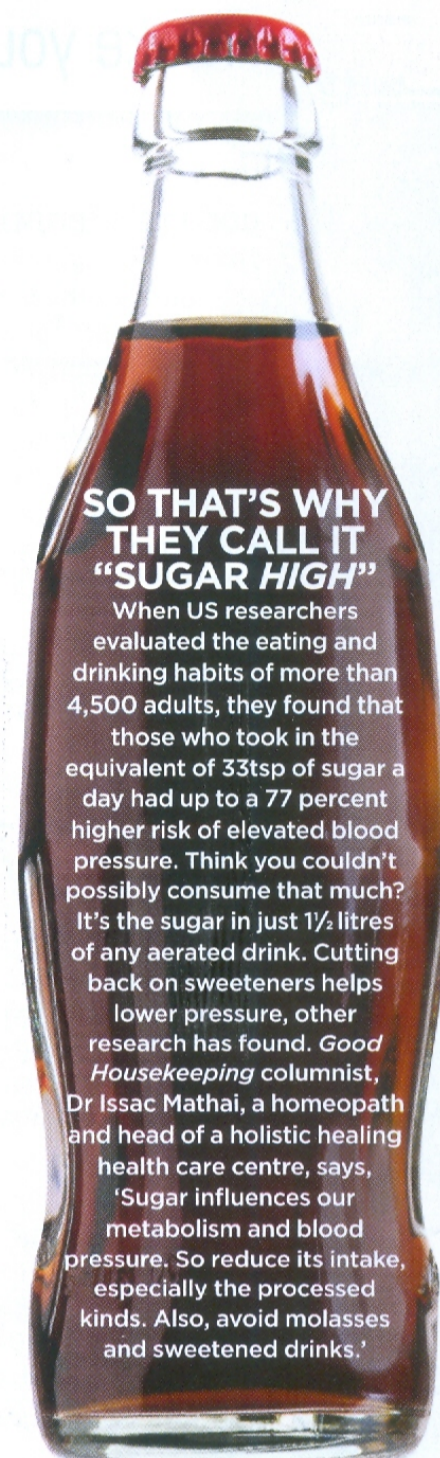
normal-weight women and men were fed breakfast, then given a shot of the hormone and asked to rate the appeal of a series of food pictures. Sweets and other high-cal fare were rated as more appealing than salads, vegetables, and other low-calorie items, just as they were – on other test days – when the volunteers were hungry from having intentionally skipped breakfast. And in both cases, brain activation, as shown on MRIs, confirmed the lure of the high-cal fare. Your New Year's resolution:

- Keep cravings for diet-wrecking foods in check by eating breakfast.
- Get your sleep. When you haven't had enough sleep, ghrelin levels rise.

Dr Ritika Samaddar, senior dietician, Max Healthcare, New Delhi says, 'Ghrelin naturally gets active when you keep off food for long durations or are stressed out. So make sure that you not only eat a healthy breakfast, but also munch on something substantial every three hours, and most importantly, keep stress at bay.'

SO THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT "SUGAR HIGH"

When US researchers evaluated the eating and drinking habits of more than 4,500 adults, they found that those who took in the equivalent of 33tsp of sugar a day had up to a 77 percent higher risk of elevated blood pressure. Think you couldn't possibly consume that much? It's the sugar in just 1½ litres of any aerated drink. Cutting back on sweeteners helps lower pressure, other research has found. *Good Housekeeping* columnist, Dr Issac Mathai, a homeopath and head of a holistic healing health care centre, says, 'Sugar influences our metabolism and blood pressure. So reduce its intake, especially the processed kinds. Also, avoid molasses and sweetened drinks.'



HEALTH IN A HURRY

5 TIPS BY ISHI KHOSLA, CLINICAL NUTRITIONIST, NEW DELHI

- In a rush, one tends to grab food that's easily available (usually unhealthy snacks). Keep some dry fruits and nuts in your pocket and munch on them, as they are nutritious and fulfilling.
- When you're strapped for time, you're more likely to eat fruits that have already been cut. Avoid this, and instead go for a whole apple or orange.
- Keep high-fibre grains such as ready-to-eat muesli, at hand to snack on.
- An egg (in any form) is the most convenient and the quickest form of breakfast. The best bet is a boiled egg with a slice of multigrain bread.
- Don't indulge in mindless eating – if you've overeaten, make sure you balance it out in the next meal.



Dr Rustom P Soonawala will be writing for us on a quarterly basis instead of monthly due to mounting work pressure.