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The Sugar Trap: We Just Can't Get Enough

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TYPE
PERSUASIVE

Sugar could be described as America's best friend. That is why Euromonitor says the average American eats 126 grams of sugar a day, according to *the Washington Post* article, "Where People Around the World Eat the Most Sugar and Fat," by Roberto Ferdman. The United States is the leading consumer of sugar. However, we shouldn't be proud of this. Instead, you could think of sugar as America's evil best friend.

Eating a little bit of sugar now and then is fine, but when you begin eating sugar 24/7, you get in serious trouble. That can cost you your life. In “The Truth about Sugar,” nutritional therapist Kerry Torrens says that the World Health Organization (WHO) reports an average American should eat thirty grams of sugar a day to be healthy. But if an average American eats 120 grams a day that is ninety unnecessary grams of sugar. These unnecessary grams of sugar are also creating health problems for our country, like Type 2 Diabetes, cancer, liver failure, obesity, and the list goes on.

Sugar has America in this big trap. Here are four reasons:

- 1) Sugar is hidden in many cereals, processed and packaged foods, ready-made meals, etc.
- 2) Sugar is very easy to access. It is available in almost every store and restaurant.
- 3) Sugar is cheap.
- 4) Sugar is highly addictive, according to health experts.

In a recent study at Everett Middle School, students could name five stores near their school that sold sugary foods. This shows how easy it is to gain access to sugar through the meals and snacks we buy. Also, when boys and girls were given a choice between a soft drink or a piece of fruit, half would choose the soft drink over the piece of fruit. This shows how addicting sugar is.

Clearly, sugar is a problem in our country and we need to fix it. Education isn't enough. Most Americans know sugar is bad for you. All the students I surveyed were able to name a health consequence of eating sugar (diabetes, cancer, fat, tooth decay, etc.). But even though all of them knew a consequence of sugar, half would still choose a soft drink. What more can we do? Many communities have tried a sugar tax and others have tried making healthy foods more accessible. These have reduced the problem but not terminated it. To eliminate a problem, you have to take out the source. Meaning, we have to take added sugar out of our stores. This is how we get soda out of an Everett student's hands, or a juice box out of a kindergartener's. This is how we get out of the sugar trap.