

[Don't Bribe Children With Sugar](#)

Category : [March 1993](#)

Published by Anonymous on Mar. 01, 1993

Don't Bribe Children With Sugar

Tandavan, Devananda

While on the subject of refined sugar [see parts one and two in January and February, 1992] we must also note that excessive sugar in the diet is addictive, making us slaves to a habit which may be equally as strong as drug or alcohol addiction. There may be also a subtle relationship here. There is a tendency for high sugar intake to "deaden" the sensitivity of the taste buds for sweet. The result of this is the inability to savor the subtle tastes of our food, and the foods become tamasic. When excess sugar is ingested there is a decrease in vata and pitta accompanied by an increase in kapha, according to the Ayurvedic system.

Perhaps the greatest danger in excessive sugar intake is its effect on the mind and our behavior. Since there is almost a universal liking of the sweet taste, it has become by many parents the source of a "bribing type of behavior." Many parents hold the sweets, especially chocolate, as a bribe for getting the children to "eat their vegetables" or perform other activities or disciplinary actions. I have seen at breakfast children being given chocolate candy to start the meal; then, of course, if they eat other food at all, they eat too much, because sweets do not satisfy our appetites. However, the usual reaction is that the children will not want to eat anything else for they know that if they act up, they will get more sweets. We can continue to eat sweets until we are "sick" of them, and even then some desire may remain. Sweets should never be used to enforce an action or discipline, for it only makes the parent lose control over themselves as well as their child. The child very quickly learns that a temper tantrum will bring about the bribe of candy or other sweets to stop screaming or crying. Thus the child manipulates the parent into action that may be very harmful for the child. This bribing will tend to change the mental development of the child, and it will last into adulthood, thus perpetuating the failure to communicate and discipline the child as mother tends to mother as she was mothered.

Using this method of child control is not an act of love but is evidence of a lack of maternal maturity and ability to truly communicate with the child. A smile and well-timed hug will transmit love to the child much more than a bribe of a sweet. I am not suggesting that sweets be totally eliminated as a dietary basic, but excessive sweets become rewards and bribes much too easily. The child, as well as the adult, must bring to eating the knowledge that it is a necessity in order to keep the body functioning and healthy. In itself, a well balanced diet will bring to us happiness and appreciation of the great gifts of God. We should consider the time of eating, which should be on a regular schedule, to be a holy time and a time for happy familial communication and sharing. The television should not be on, current events or governmental problems should not be discussed. There should be serenity and prayers before eating, during the meal and after the meal. I have previously mentioned that a period of 10-15 minutes after meals should be spent in meditation.

Article copyright Himalayan Academy.