



HEALTH & WELLNESS / LIFESTYLE

A Tale of Halloween Candy and Evil Wind

E Douglas Kihn, DOM, LAc (ret.)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- A little bit of sweet strengthens the spleen, but excess sweet causes a damp condition and will weaken the spleen.
- Excessive amounts of sugar caused a massive phlegm condition that the body used to try to cool the rising heat and expel the evil wind from the sinuses, but to no avail.
- In this doctor's personal experience, consuming excessive amounts of sugar will weaken the *weiqi* and result in weeks of misery, regardless of a person's current state of health.

Once upon a time, there lived a doctor of Oriental medicine (DOM). He was lean and clean (4% body fat), fit (a fitness trainer) and healthy (a health coach). Long ago, he'd stopped worrying, hurrying and overeating, and consequently hadn't gotten sick for such a long time. He thought himself to be nearly invincible. Such hubris rarely ends well.

As Halloween approached, his thoughts turned to sugar, a food that he had mostly avoided for over two decades. Sugar is not a "junk food" or a poison. Sugar is a *strong* food. A little bit of sweet strengthens the spleen, but excess sweet causes a damp condition and will weaken the spleen. And of course, an excess of any food will lead to food stagnation and associated pathogenic heat.

The doctor recalled fondly the days of his youth when, returning from a successful night of trick-or-treating, he would bring home a bag of his favorite candy bars and spend all the next day gorging on them.

And so, he wondered what would happen if he did the same thing (without the trick-or-treating) in his

current state of pristine health. He decided to carry out an experiment – for the advancement of science, you understand.

On Halloween day, he went to the grocery store and bought one of those big bags of small candy bars designed to give out to “ghosts and goblins” during that evening. According to plan, most of the candy was left over for his experiment. About mid-morning on the next day, he started to eat candy, first selecting his favorites, of course – Almond Joy, Snickers, Payday, and so on.

He got so carried away with the delicious sweetness that he went way past his comfort level, eating and eating until his belly hurt. After a break of several hours, he continued with his experiment, until once again belly pain forced him to stop. After a third session of self-abuse that evening, he decided to give the rest of the candy away to some friends. He went to bed, anxious to discover the results upon awakening.

To his surprise and glee, he felt just fine that day and even the next. *I really am lean and clean inside*, he said to himself in self-congratulation.

However, on the third morning, he woke up with a killer sore throat that lasted three whole days. All that stagnant food had set up a pattern of *yangming* heat that had risen into the throat, rupturing the tissues and laying out a welcome mat for an invasion of evil wind. The exterior pathogen was so strong that even several courses of *yinqiao* couldn't expel it.

The sore throat gave way to a constant and continuous runny nose for the next two weeks. Excessive amounts of sugar had caused a massive phlegm condition that the body used to try to cool the rising heat and expel the evil wind from the sinuses, but to no avail.

The exterior pathogen overpowered the weakened and distracted *weiqi*, finding its way into the lungs, where it obstructed the flow of fluids. This developed into a coughing situation that lasted for another three days until finally, normalcy and balance were re-established.

The experiment was over. The doctor was satisfied and, daresay, humbled to learn that consuming excessive amounts of sugar will weaken the *weiqi* and result in weeks of misery, regardless of a person's current state of health.

I'll never do that again!

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