

## TRANSCRIPTS

### *The Stress-Sugar Connection*©

An exclusive podcast series by Wendy Padob and Cathy Ormon

#### *Part 2 – The Warning Signs*



**Cathy Ormon, author-host of The Sugar Switch® Podcast interviews Wendy Padob, National Board-Certified Health & Wellness Coach and Founder of WP Creative Wellness**

Welcome to Part 2 of *The Stress-Sugar Connection* series. Today we will be discussing the warning signs of too much stress and sugar. Once again, I am really excited and happy to have Special Guest, Wendy Padob, with me in my virtual studio. Wendy has a lot of knowledge to share and we'll dig deep into the warning signs, so grab a pen and paper!

We have designed this series to help you understand what's really going on between stress and sugar so you can take action to change unhealthy habits. Awareness and identifying your own unique warning signs are KEY. Then you can take steps to make powerful changes in small, sustainable steps.

Here's the good news: throughout this series we are going to talk about change, and how making a switch or a change in one area, like stress, can make it easier to switch or change the other area, like sugar.

Once again, my Special Guest today is Wendy Padob. Wendy is a national board-certified health and wellness coach and mindful lifestyle educator specializing in stress management. She is CEO and founder of WP Creative Wellness, a private coaching practice in New York City, New York. Before becoming a coach, Wendy was a successful communications executive and writer who experienced first-hand how stress can take its toll. She has been through her own health journey with multiple repetitive strain injuries, which caused such debilitating pain for her, she had to stop working and go on disability leave. Despite being advised by her doctors to give up writing, she made profound changes to her lifestyle habits and emerged healthier, more resilient and able to perform better than before. Wendy is deeply committed to helping others prevent or rebound from chronic stress.

Welcome, Wendy! You have so much experience and expertise in stress and stress management. I am so delighted to work with you!

**Wendy:** Thanks, Cathy! It's a pleasure to join you and help raise awareness about the dangers of excess stress and sugar. Knowing the warning signs can empower us to make healthier choices so we can live long and prosper!

**Cathy:** Yes, having knowledge and feeling empowered to make the best choices – that's absolutely the goal! There's lots to talk about when it comes to the warning signs of unhealthy levels of stress and sugar consumption. Let's get right into it! How does stress-sugar imbalance show up physically, emotionally and mentally?

**Wendy:** Well, our body is really good at warning us when something is wrong by sending us physical, mental and emotional signals. If we listen to these warning signs, they will tell us when our stress and sugar levels are too high so we can 'course correct' and make changes to our habits before they spiral out of control and damage our health. Warning signs will be different for each of us, but many are common. Let's start with stress.

If you're under too much stress, physical signs that you may notice can include:

- back, neck or chest pain,
- rapid heart rate,
- skin breakouts like acne or rashes,
- breathing problems,
- diarrhea or constipation,
- nausea,
- loss of sex drive,
- frequent colds or flu,
- lack of energy and
- sweet cravings.

If you have too much mental stress, it can show up as:

- memory problems,
- difficulty concentrating,
- poor judgment,
- seeing only the negative,
- anxious or racing thoughts,
- constant worrying, and
- panic attacks.

And, emotional signs can include

- frequent crying,
- mood swings,
- difficulty making decisions,
- depression,

- sadness,
- agitation,
- irritability or anger,
- frustration, and
- feeling overwhelmed, lonely or isolated.

Many warning signs of too much sugar and blood sugar imbalance are actually the same. And those include:

- irritability,
- anxiety,
- nervousness,
- mood swings,
- brain fog or poor concentration,
- insomnia,
- lack of energy plus fatigues after meals,
- fat - especially around the midriff,
- excessive thirst,
- cravings,
- addictions to caffeine, alcohol and nicotine,
- drowsiness during the day,
- excessive sweating and
- difficulty losing weight.

Keep in mind, these symptoms can also be related to other problems. So, if you notice a pattern of changes happening in your body, it's time to see a doctor and find out if your symptoms are stress or sugar related. For example, people with a history of anxiety tend to struggle more with stress, which can be a warning sign of an anxiety disorder.

**Cathy:** Wow! There are SO many warning signs of stress, because we are talking about 3 different areas: physical, mental and emotional. And it is really interesting to note that blood sugar imbalance has so many of the exact same warning signs as stress.

So, I believe it becomes a key point to know yourself – always listen to what your body is telling you and understand what your ‘normal’ is, in physical health, mental health and emotions. That will make it easier to pick up on the warning signs.

**Wendy:** Absolutely! Yes, ‘knowing thyself’ and listening to what your body is telling you is key - especially since warning signs can be subtle. Like coming down with a cold. If you seldom catch a cold, this can be a sign that your body is under too much stress and needs rest. So, respecting your body’s needs – and having a plan to manage excess stress and sugar intake so they don’t get out of hand - can support you to make better choices in how you will care for your overall health and wellbeing.

**Cathy:** Wendy, from our previous conversations, you indicated that a ‘domino effect’

happens if warning signs are ignored. Can you tell us about that?

**Wendy:** Yes. If we continue to ignore warning signs and allow stress or sugar to ‘consume’ us on a daily basis, it can cause us to behave in unhealthy ways – from nervous nail biting, overeating and sleeping too much or too little, to withdrawing from family and friends, procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities, drinking or doing drugs to relax.

Habits like overeating sugar and experiencing constant highs and lows (that blood sugar roller coaster we talked about in Part 1) can ‘domino’ and lead to weight gain and ultimately diabetes, one of the leading causes of heart attacks and strokes.

**Cathy:** How do habits spiral out of control, or take over our life and ‘switch on’ serious health problems?

**Wendy:** If you eat a donut, for example, you reinforce a behavioral pattern in your brain that says: “I need to eat this to feel good” and you start to form a habit that becomes ingrained – which can be very hard to control. Before long, that 1 donut can turn into 3 or 4 or a carton of ice cream.

The science behind habits like smoking and overindulging in sugar involve the brain’s dopamine or *reward* system. Dopamine is a ‘feel-good’ chemical that transmits signals between neurons in our brain. And when we first eat those donuts, we get a euphoric feeling from doing it as a result of a dopamine release. But, due to the addictive nature of sugar, repeating that behavior long-term will change the connections between the neurons and brain systems responsible for our actions.

And that is how we start to form bad habits in the first place – and ‘switch on’ serious health problems later, which is why it’s super important to pay attention to warning signs and reduce high levels of stress and sugar – sooner than later!

**Cathy:** Can you please clarify what you mean by ‘changing the connection between the neurons and the brain systems’? Do you mean that our body gets used to the level of dopamine release and it takes more and more sugar for us to feel the dopamine and the euphoric feeling?

**Wendy:** Yes, over time, repeated sugar consumption leads to prolonged dopamine signaling, greater stimulation of the brain’s reward pathways and a need for even more sugar to activate all of the dopamine receptors like before. In other words, the brain becomes ‘tolerant’ to sugar — and more is needed to attain the same ‘sugar high.’

So, the question is: how *do* we reduce stress levels and cut back on sugar? Here’s the good news! You have a lot more control than you think! No matter how high your stress levels are, there are steps you can take to relieve the pressure and take charge of your lifestyle, your thoughts, your emotions, and the way you deal with problems. You also don’t need sugar as much as you think! In fact, you can reduce your cravings for sugar by retraining your taste buds to enjoy things that aren’t as sweet.

*The secret is to make small, gradual changes.* And we've made it super simple for you to get started! We have a handy tip sheet for you, which you can download for FREE!

**Cathy:** Wendy, before we get into the details of the tips sheet, to get our listeners started making changes, I'd like to tell them about next week's Episode.

Next week will be The Stress-Sugar Connection, Part 3 - Switch ON Control. We will be taking a close look at identifying the stressors in your life and the food and mood triggers, and you'll discover why it's so important to identify those. We'll also discuss how you can change your reactions to stress and triggers, and we'll give you 7 healthy lifestyle choices or healthy habits to form. You won't want to miss out on the special offer we will have for you at the end of the next episode.

**Wendy:** Thank you, Cathy. And getting back to that handy tip sheet, our gift is called '*10 Proven Tips For Reducing Stress AND Sugar*' naturally, which listeners can download for free from me, Wendy - your Stress Coach, or from Cathy - your Sugar Switch® coach. Here's how:

- Go to Wendy's website [wpcreativewellness.com/podcasts](http://wpcreativewellness.com/podcasts) or Cathy's website [cathyormon.com/reduce-stress-sugar](http://cathyormon.com/reduce-stress-sugar) .... where you can download the: *10 Proven Tips For Reducing Stress AND Sugar Naturally*.
- You can also take Wendy and Cathy's Stress-Sugar Awareness Quizzes to check your current stress and sugar levels. Wendy's Stress Awareness Quizzes are available at [wpcreativewellness.com/stress-quizzes](http://wpcreativewellness.com/stress-quizzes) and Cathy's Sugar Awareness Quiz is available at [sugarswitchonequiz.com](http://sugarswitchonequiz.com)

**Cathy:** Thank you so much, Wendy, for being here today! I am looking forward to speaking with you in the next episode of this series, The Stress-Sugar Connection.

**Wendy:** Thank you, Cathy – it's been great and I'm excited to join you for Part 3 of this series: Switch ON Control. In the meantime, listeners may find it helpful to tune into Part 1 of this series about The Science behind stress and sugar cravings, which relates to today's discussion.