



## **Sugar Cravings/Mood Quiz and the Powerful Endorphin Connection to Emotional Eating**

Sugar cravings and emotional eating (and associated mood problems), can be a sign of imbalanced brain chemistry and/or nutrient deficiencies. But they can often be very easily corrected with the use of targeted amino acids, so no willpower is required and you won't feel deprived. Sugar will just become a non-issue, you won't be drawn to sugar and carbs for comfort and you'll be able to take it or leave it! Really!

Many of my clients who are emotional eaters really resonate with the symptoms of low endorphins. Here is a sugar cravings/mood quiz covering all the categories: low blood sugar, low serotonin, low catecholamines, low GABA and low endorphins. We'll go into how to address low endorphins in greater detail below.

**Which category or categories do you fall into?** (many people fall into more than one category)

### #1 Does sugar keep you grounded?

- ✓ do you get irritable and shaky between meals or if you skip a meal?
- ✓ do you have intense cravings for something sweet at all/any times of the day
- ✓ do you feel better and more grounded after a meal

These are all signs of low blood sugar / adrenal fatigue  
Stable blood sugar and good adrenals = grounded, no intense sugar cravings  
AMAZING AMINO ACID: Glutamine

### #2 Does sugar give you a mood lift?

- ✓ does a chocolate bar or other sugary food make you feel all warm and fuzzy, happy and optimistic?
- ✓ do you have sleep problems?
- ✓ do you have afternoon or evening cravings especially?
- ✓ are you depressed, negative, worried or anxious?

These are all signs of low serotonin  
Enough serotonin = Positive, Confident, Flexible, Easy-going  
AMAZING AMINO ACID: Tryptophan or 5-HTP

#3 Does sugar give you energy?

- ✓ do you need a soda in the afternoon to keep you going?
- ✓ do you have difficulty with focus and drive?
- ✓ are you depressed or negative?

These are all signs of low catecholamines  
Enough catecholamines = Energized, Upbeat, Alert  
AMAZING AMINO ACID: Tyrosine

#4 Is sugar calming?

- ✓ do you eat choc-chip cookies or other sugary foods (or drink wine) to stay cool, calm and collected?
- ✓ do you have anxiety or panic attacks?
- ✓ do you have stiff and tense muscles?

These are all signs of low GABA  
Enough GABA = Relaxed, stress-free  
AMAZING AMINO ACID: GABA

#5 Is sugar comforting/rewarding/numbing?

- ✓ after a tough day at work does eating a pint of ice-cream help?
- ✓ are you sensitivity to emotional (or physical) pain?
- ✓ do you cry or tear up easily?
- ✓ do you often eat as a reward or for pleasure, comfort, or numbness?

These are all signs of low endorphins  
Enough endorphins: Pleasure, joy, feelings of comfort, pain-free  
AMAZING AMINO ACID: DPA/D-phenylalanine  
(see additional information on this one below)

The above are very summarized and simplified modifications from questionnaires in *The Antianxiety Food Solution*, which were reprinted (with some modifications) with permission from *The Mood Cure* (2004) by Julia Ross. Nutritional psychologist, Julia Ross, is one of the greatest pioneers in the field of amino acids and I had the good fortune to work with her at her clinic, Recovery Systems, for two years.

If you have a brain chemistry imbalance (and experience comfort eating or mood problems) and take the needed amino acid, you can expect noticeable improvements within a few minutes, and often dramatic improvements within a day. It is very easy to remember to take the amino acids you need, because you'll notice an immediate turn for the worse if you miss a dose. It typically isn't necessary to supplement with specific amino acids for more than three to six months if you eat a whole foods diet and get enough protein.

## **The endorphins and emotional eating**

Many of my clients who are emotional eaters really resonate with the symptoms of low endorphins. Endorphins are neurotransmitters that reduce physical and emotional pain. You may be familiar with the term “runner’s high,” which refers to the effects of endorphins that are released at a certain level of exertion. If you have sufficient endorphins, you’ll feel pleasure and joy, similar to the feeling you get when someone gives you a big hug. You also won’t be drawn to eating sweet or fatty foods to comfort yourself. The amino acid D-phenylalanine inhibits the enzyme that breaks down endorphins, so supplementing with it, as either D-phenylalanine (DPA) or DL-phenylalanine (DLPA), will help raise endorphin levels and resolve symptoms of low endorphins. DPA is more potent for raising endorphins and is one of my favorite supplements for clients with emotional eating. DLPA is an option if you also have symptoms of low catecholamines, as some of it will be converted to tyrosine. However, it has less of an impact on raising endorphins for some people.

### **Steps to Raise Endorphin Levels**

When you have low endorphins, you may find that you really love certain foods and may eat these foods as a way of comforting, rewarding yourself or soothing or numb your mood. I often hear clients say things like “Oh, I just *love* chocolate” or “I *love* chocolate cookies *so* much,” with that special smile where their eyes light up. They may also have heightened sensitivity to emotional pain, crying or tearing up easily, and may be almost tearful when they consider the idea of giving these foods up. Heightened sensitivity to physical pain is common too. But shortly after taking some DPA, they’re generally able to say, “Oh, I could just take it or leave it right now,” and they’re quite surprised that it works that effectively and that quickly.

Here is a specific dosage you might try, all taken between meals: 500 to 1,500 mg DPA, three times a day, before breakfast, midmorning, and midafternoon. You may also need some after dinner. If supplementing with DPA be sure to eat sufficient good-quality protein and take a free-form amino acid blend with all nine essential amino acids, including tryptophan, to support your body’s production of endorphins. Free-form amino acids don’t require digestion and are very easily absorbed.

Also, consider whether sensitivity to gluten or dairy may be an issue, as these foods can produce a druglike addicting effect, similar to an endorphin-high. Exercise, meditation, and acupuncture can all help raise endorphin levels. Interestingly, acts of generosity, such doing nice things for others, can also raise endorphin levels. So can deep breathing, good memories, a hug, being out in nature, being in love, or a massage. Cranial electrical stimulation, an FDA-approved approach for treating depression, pain, and insomnia, also raises levels of both endorphins and serotonin. Laughter also raises endorphins and serotonin. In fact, research shows that mirthful laughter also reduces inflammation and pain, and improves heart health.

There are some precautions to be aware of when taking supplemental amino acids. Please refer to the precautions in *The Antianxiety Food Solution* (chapter 7). These are reprinted from *The Mood Cure*. If you’re currently taking a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) or monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), don’t take either 5-HTP or tryptophan unless you’re working with a knowledgeable practitioner. I also recommend the chapter on antidepressants and amino acids in *The Mood Cure*.

### **Theresa's story: demonic urge to eat sugar and all things sweet**

Theresa described her sugar cravings as an “almost demonic urge to eat sugar and all things sweet.” Making changes to her diet and trying to control her blood sugar levels by eating the right foods at the right times wasn't enough to eliminate her cravings. However, she did find that taking glutamine whenever she felt the urge to eat something sweet made a difference. Opening a 500 mg capsule onto her tongue was more effective than swallowing the capsule. We had the same conversation that I have with all clients who would obviously rather eat something sweet than open a glutamine capsule onto their tongue. I told her, “If you have a craving, tell yourself that you're going to indulge, but also humor your nutritionist and take the glutamine anyway. You may be surprised to find your urge completely disappears.” Theresa was pleasantly surprised to find that it worked for her. She recently wrote me to report on a few other changes that had been pivotal to her recovery: “Exercise, improved sleep, meditation, and affirmations. Add to that a personal tenacity, an unwillingness to give up, and a deep desire to conquer this lifelong foe.



### **Debbie's story: she LOVED chocolate – it was her reward!**

Debbie was in her 50s, was obese and had been in OA (Overeaters Anon) for 9 months with no results. She loved the support there but was still overeating...food was her reward and she LOVED chocolate. Debbie's sleep was also terrible (3-4 hours a night) and she was anxious, edgy and depressed. She was miserable, remembering how she had been very athletic until menopause! Our first appointment was on a Friday and she did the glutamine and DPA trials in the office and noticed immediate benefits but was somewhat skeptical: “Am I imagining this? Could this really work so quickly?” Well, I received an excited call from Debbie on Sunday evening: “I wasn't imagining this. They are still working and my cravings are gone, completely gone! These amino acids are truly miracles!” Glutamine was the key for her intense desire for something sweet and DPA provide comfort for her and prevented her from feeling deprived. Later, we also added tryptophan and GABA and she is now sleeping 6 and more hours a night, losing weight and her husband told her recently that she is more like her old self. She feels calm, content and has hope! Emotional eating is a thing of the past.

I am Trudy Scott, a Food-Mood expert and nutritionist and I educate women about real whole food and finding natural solutions for anxiety and stress, depression and low motivation and other mood problems. I am so passionate about what I do because I used to suffer terribly from anxiety, unexplained fears, waking with a sense of doom and even panic attacks - and I have used gluten elimination and the amazing healing powers of foods and nutrients to completely heal.

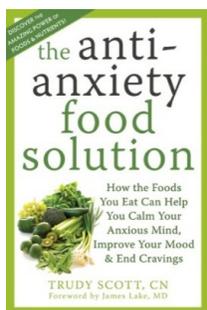
You can read more in my book *The Antianxiety Food Solution: How The Foods You Eat Can Help You Calm Your Anxious Mind, Improve Your Mood and End Cravings*: all the areas that may affect your mood and emotional eating: eating real whole food (including four unique antianxiety food solution diets), avoiding sugar and balancing blood sugar, avoiding caffeine and alcohol, optimizing digestion and eliminating candida, food intolerances such as gluten and carbs in general, more details on balancing brain chemistry, addressing zinc and vitamin B6 deficiencies and lifestyle factors. You will be able to use this information to take charge of your mental and physical health – so you can feel on top of the world always and banish emotional eating once and for all!

I invite you to sign up for my twice-a-month ezine “*Food, Mood and Gal Stuff*” here [www.antianxietyfoodsolution.com](http://www.antianxietyfoodsolution.com) or here [www.everywomanover29.com](http://www.everywomanover29.com). You’ll get up-to-date information, new research, recipes, workshop, new product information and two free Special Reports “*5 Simple Steps to Reduce Anxiety Now*” and “*9 Great Questions Women Ask About Food, Mood and their Health*”. You can also find many great articles on my blog [www.everywomanover29.com/blog](http://www.everywomanover29.com/blog)

And if you need more help and one-one support, please contact me about a consultation. I do work with people all over the world and we start the process with a complimentary 15-minute phone consultation. Again, please just email me [trudy@everywomanover29.com](mailto:trudy@everywomanover29.com)  
To your health and happiness!

*Trudy*

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