

Why do sweets make you thirsty?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Thirst is the body's way of keeping its fluids in balance. It is triggered when the body runs low on water, or when the concentration of dissolved particles in the blood rises too high. Sweets can do the second.

Sugar in the blood

The sugar in sweets is absorbed from the gut into the bloodstream. As the endocrinologist Dr Caroline Apovian of Boston University School of Medicine explained to Health.com, that sudden arrival of sugar raises the concentration of particles dissolved in the blood.

The body works to keep the fluid inside and outside its cells at the same concentration. When the blood becomes more concentrated, water moves out of the cells by osmosis to even things up, and the cells shrink a little as they lose water.

The brain notices

Clusters of cells in the brain, called osmoreceptors, sit outside the blood brain barrier and can sense the concentration of the blood. When it rises, they set off the urge to find water and drink. According to Dr Apovian, the thirst can arrive fairly quickly, within about 5 or 10 minutes of the sugar being absorbed.

Salty sweets do it too

Salt works in the same way. Indiana Public Media's science programme A Moment of Science explains that once salt or sugar is absorbed, its particles act like little siphons, drawing water out of the body's cells, and the brain responds with thirst. Sodium, from ordinary salt, is the classic trigger for this kind of thirst. Nordic salty liquorice is a different case: its salty taste comes mainly from ammonium chloride rather than ordinary salt: see [how is salt liquorice made?](#)

When thirst is a warning sign

Thirst after a bag of sweets is normal. But feeling thirsty all the time is different. The NHS lists it among the most common symptoms of type 2 diabetes, along with peeing more than usual, feeling very tired and losing weight without trying. If you or your child have these symptoms, see a GP: see [sweets and diabetes](#)

A drink of water

A glass of water is the simplest way to quench it. For what sugar does to your teeth, see [sweets and teeth](#)

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