

[Sniffles come readily with just a dip into the SAD diet](#)

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It is truly amazing how sensitive I am to the Standard American Diet (SAD)- basically anything with sugar, salt, oil or processing will make me feel positively awful. On a recent trip to Chicago, my ultimate weakness was spotted: a chocolate shop selling extra rich, dark hot chocolate. It was cold outside with a wind chill that would make anyone want to hibernate and I was freezing from head to toe. And I wanted that hot chocolate. I wanted to hold it in my numb hands and I wanted to feel it's rich warmth flowing down my throat.

Within a few minutes that hot chocolate was mine- I ordered it with soymilk and topped it with a wonderful sprinkling of cinnamon- and I felt a rush of glee as I sipped the warm, sweet chocolaty bit of heaven. I could taste the sugar as it rolled off my tongue. I wanted more even though I knew it packed a heavy sugar punch. So I drank and I drank until I reached the solid chocolate bottom. Add in a few pieces of white bread at a dinner outing and let's just say my body did not thank me kindly in return.



Flickr: [anna gutermuth](#)

Next day of trip- runny nose, check; icky congestion, check; I think I am getting sick, check. Determination to seek out delicious, sugar-free, healthy food, check.

This is a confession of an extremely healthy eater. I don't feel well when I go off my nutritarian diet for even just a few meals. I felt so much better when I found a Whole Foods Market and I was able to load my cart with a heaping pile of greens, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, beans and all of the other healthy foods that I adore. I got some sweet potatoes and persimmons and I relished in a box of raspberries and blueberries. And I bought a date sweetened, chocolate Lara bar, because I do love chocolate after all and healthy food will never equal denial for me. I felt alive and in the zone with my food purchases. Goodbye sniffles and icky congestion! Hello tasty healthy food and feeling fresh and alive!

As anyone who has made the transition from the SAD diet to a plant-based, nutrient rich one will understand, our bodies simply feel better when we eat foods that nourish our cells with nutrients rather than foods that provide our cells with nothing but a nutrient devoid toxic load. Not only does eating well help to prevent chronic diseases later on in life, but it helps us to live richly and feel most optimal in the here and now.

The thing is, once you are eating healthfully for a big part of your life, your body is simply intolerant of junk foods. You have to be unhealthy to build up tolerance to drugs, alcohol and junk food. My father calls people intolerant of unhealthy choices, "black-belt nutritarians" I must be a third degree black belt then, because I hate feeling icky if I eat SAD food. I have learned the hard way, each time you feel physically bad, it makes you not want to eat the junk next time, so that these SAD events become more infrequent. It may be a rare occasion for me, but then I get that wake-up call, which reminds me like a bolt-of-lightening that I can't fool my body; it's just too darn smart.

Have you felt a difference in the way you feel when you eat a healthy, natural foods diet versus an unhealthy one? Do even small cheats make you feel icky?

Every time I don't feel well after eating standard American fare I am reminded that feeling well truly is priceless and I am so fortunate to have the knowledge to make the right decisions about what to eat to feel my best now and into the future.