Depression, Alcoholism, Linked to Sweet Tooth

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Children with depressive symptoms or a family history of excessive alcohol were more likely to like lots of sugar, according to a report in the Palm Beach Post.

The study looked at 300 kids and gave them water with five levels of sugar in them. The kids with depressive symptoms or whose parents drank a lot of alcohol liked their sweetened water about one third more intensely sweet than the average kid - the equivalent of 14 teaspoons of sugar in one cup of water.

“At this point, we don’t know whether this higher ’bliss point’ for sweets is a marker for later alcohol use,” commented the study’s author, Julie Mennella.

A cautionary note, researchers reported that 49 percent of the kids in the study had parents that drank a lot of alcohol. This seems unusually high to me. Even if it doesn’t perfectly predict alcohol or drug abuse though, I’d bet that it does predict a life-long struggle with weight control.

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