

Sugar and Added Sugars: What You Need to Know

Not all sugars are created equally! In this handout, you will learn about different types of sugar and how to add better sources of sugar to your daily diet.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUGAR IN MY DIET?

There are 2 main types of sugar in a person's daily diet:

- **Naturally-occurring sugars** are found naturally in fruits (fructose) and milk (lactose). These are better choices to include in your daily diet.
- **Added sugars** include sugars added to beverages and foods

Examples of foods with **naturally-occurring sugars** include:

- Fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables
- Unsweetened whole grain breads, crackers and pasta
- Brown rice
- Milk
- Fructose (sugar found in fruit)

Examples of foods with **added sugars** include:

- Regular sodas, energy drinks and sports drinks
- Candy
- Fruit drinks, such as fruit punch and some smoothies
- Baked goods, such as pastries, doughnuts, muffins, cakes and cookies
- Ice cream and frozen yogurts

HOW MUCH ADDED SUGAR SHOULD I HAVE EVERY DAY?

Most people should have no more than 6-9 teaspoons (25-36 grams) of added sugar in their diets every day.

WHAT EFFECTS DO ADDED SUGARS HAVE ON ME?

- Added sugars provide calories, but no essential (healthy and necessary) nutrients (such as fiber, vitamins or minerals).
- Foods with added sugars add more calories to your diet than you need with no nutrients. This can lead to unhealthy weight gain and a higher risk of chronic (long-term) diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.
- Eating added sugars can cause spikes in your blood sugar. These spikes can cause mood swings, making you feel sad, angry, irritable or depressed.

Did you know...?

Many of our favorite foods have added sugars. The average American gets 270 calories of added sugar each day! That's about **17 teaspoons of sugar!**

Read the ingredient list on your favorite foods to check for added sugar. Whenever possible, look for unsweetened versions of your favorite foods.

Foods with unexpected added sugars include:

- Barbecue sauce, ketchup, salad dressing and other condiments
- Cereal and protein bars
- Dried fruit, canned fruit and applesauce
- Granola and granola bars
- Frozen foods
- Instant oatmeal
- Pasta sauce
- Some whole grain cereals



TIPS TO SPOT ADDED SUGARS ON A NUTRITION LABEL

- **Look at the ingredient list.** The higher up sugars are on the ingredient list, the more added sugar is in the food product.
- **Know the many names of sugar.** Added sugars can also be called brown sugar, corn sweetener, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, turbinado sugar

Did you know...?

Almost half of the added sugars in our diets come from drinks like sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks and other sweetened beverages.

TIPS TO ADD BETTER SOURCES OF SUGAR TO YOUR DIET

- Eat fresh fruit for dessert or snacks.
- Have **unsweetened** cereals instead of sweetened ones. Add fresh fruit for extra flavor, fiber and natural sweetness.
- Have some of your favorite sweets or drinks—just have less! (For example, enjoy a small soda or candy bar once a week as a treat.)
- Drink water, low-fat or nonfat milk or **unsweetened** milk alternatives (almond, soy, rice) instead of sugary drinks.
- Have tea and coffee **without sugar**.
- Eat plain yogurt and add fresh and/or dried fruit.

HOW ADDED SUGARS ADD UP

Drinks

- Coke (12 ounces, or oz.) – 9 teaspoons (tsp.) of sugar



- Energy drink (8 oz.) – 5 tsp. of sugar



- Sports drink (20 oz.) – 8 tsp. of sugar



- Starbucks caramel macchiato (venti) – 11 tsp.



- Starbucks white chocolate mocha (venti) – 18 tsp.



Food:

- Cereal, flavored (1 cup) – 4 tsp. of sugar



- Chocolate cake (1 slice) – 12 tsp. of sugar



- Yogurt, flavored (6 oz.) – 5 tsp. of sugar



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