

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Strategies for Reducing Sugar

Nutrition and Meal Management |
Nutrition Needs

Purpose: This handout provides ways to reduce excess sugar in diets.

Consuming too much sugar can lead to an increased risk of heart and cardiovascular diseases. According to the American Heart Association, getting 17%–21% of calories from added sugar can increase your risk of heart disease by 38%. The recommended percentage of calories from added sugars is 10% or less. Excessive dietary sugar intake is also associated with weight gain and higher levels of triglycerides, which is a fat found in the blood. Sugar can also decrease high-density lipoproteins, which is your “good cholesterol.” Excess sugar can be harmful to your body.

How can you limit your sugar consumption? The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends three strategies. First, find out how many calories you’re getting from added sugars now. Once you know, you can begin to make changes to your diet.

The second strategy is to make some healthy changes. Replace foods and drinks high in added sugars with healthier options. Here are some suggestions:

- Replace sugary cereals with unsweetened cereal with fruit.
- Drink water, 1%, or fat-free milk instead of sugary beverages.
- If you are going to drink a soda, choose a smaller size.
- Add one teaspoon of sugar to your coffee or tea instead of two.

The third strategy is to check the ingredients. Look for added sugars in the ingredients list on the Nutrition Facts label. Ingredients are arranged in descending order. The ingredients with the most significant amount are listed first, and it continues to descend. If sugar is listed within the first few ingredients or if multiple ingredients are sugar, it is primarily made up of sugar. Use the following list to identify some common added sugars when reading ingredient lists. Added sugars may be in foods you do not expect—such as pasta sauce, pizza, and crackers.

Added Sugar Ingredients			
Anhydrous dextrose	Brown sugar	Aspartame	Corn syrup
Corn syrup solids	Dextrose	Fructose	High-fructose corn syrup
Honey	Invert sugar	Lactose	Malt syrup
Maltose	Nectars	Pancake syrup	Raw sugar
Sucrose	Sugar	White granulated sugar	Acesulfame potassium

Examples of Added Sugars

- 1 tablespoon of tomato ketchup = 12 calories of added sugars
- 1 bottle of sports drink = (20 ounces) 122 calories of added sugars
- 1 can of regular soda = (12 ounces) 126 calories of added sugars
- 1 piece of chocolate cake = 196 calories of added sugars

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Tips for Success

- Sweeten foods with fruits.
- Choose ready-to-eat cereals that are low in added sugars.
- Avoid grain-based desserts.
- Prepare recipes with the least amount of sugar needed.
- Use fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables because they are naturally low in added sugars.
- Choose fruits canned in 100% fruit juice.
- Prepare fruits and vegetables without sugar.
- Serve water in place of sugary beverages.
- When serving milk, choose plain 1% or fat-free milk.

References

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