

Avoid Added Sugars

There are two types of sugars present in our diets: naturally occurring and added sugars. Naturally occurring sugars are found in food such as fresh fruit (fructose) and milk products (lactose). Any product containing milk or fruit has some natural sugars.

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods and beverages when they are processed or prepared. They add little to no nutrients, but are full of empty calories. They can lead to serious health issues including: obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, poor dental health and heart disease.



Check food labels for these commonly added sugars:

- Brown sugar
- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Fruit juice concentrate
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Invert sugar
- Malt sugar
- Molasses
- Raw sugar
- Sugar
- Syrup
- Sugar molecules ending in “-ose” — dextrose, fructose, glucose, maltose, sucrose.

These common foods that may be adding excess sugar to your diet:

Soda and sports drinks.

Soda and sports drinks are well-known sources of added sugar. Try a sodium-free, naturally-flavored sparkling water if you crave a sweet bubbly beverage.

Sweetened yogurt and other dairy products.

Rather than choosing sweetened yogurt, look for plain, non-fat Greek yogurt and add in fruit, oats, or vanilla. Plain Greek yogurt has only 4 grams (1 tsp) of sugar and 15 grams of hunger-satisfying protein!

Bottled sauces, condiments and marinades.

Watch out for condiments like sweet & sour and teriyaki sauces, honey mustard, relish, and ketchup. Check food labels for serving size and added sugar information. These are common yet lesser known sources of added sugar.

“Diet” and “low-fat” foods.

Often, reduced- or low-fat foods have added sugars (and sodium) to enhance flavor. Don't be fooled by flashy marketing. Check the food label to get the whole story.

Store-bought bread.

Many breads and rolls contain added sugar. Check food labels and find a whole grain bread, with a whole grain as the first ingredient.

Sugar-sweetened cereals and instant oatmeal.

Opt for a lower-sugar cereal by checking the food label, or start with whole oats and choose your own add-ins such as fruit & cinnamon.

Fruit snack and granola bars.

What may seem like a healthy snack may be adding excess sugar to your diet. Check food labels at the grocery store and aim for snacks with lower amounts of sugar.

Dried and canned fruit, sweetened applesauce.

Opt for water-packed or 100% juice-packed canned fruits. Choose unsweetened applesauce and dried fruit. Keep in mind the serving size listed on the food label.

Flavored coffee and tea drinks.

Flavored and blended iced coffee beverages can have staggering amounts of sugar. Instead, go for plain coffee with low-fat milk or unsweetened tea.

Restaurant foods.

Restaurants are notorious for extreme portion sizes and adding sugar to sauces, desserts, and dressings to enhance flavor and keep customers coming back for more. If you do eat out, ask your server to box up half of your meal before it gets to the table. Ask for dressings & sauces on the side to control your portions.

Read the Nutrition Facts label to see how much sugar is in the foods you are eating. One teaspoon of sugar is equal to 4 grams of sugar.



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends limiting added sugar to 6 teaspoons per day for women and 9 teaspoons per day for men. Preteens and teens should limit added sugars to 8 teaspoons per day while children should limit added sugars to 5 teaspoons per day.

Food or Drink	Grams of sugar	Teaspoons of sugar	Calories
12 ounce Frappuccino	57	14	360
12 ounce fruit juice	48	12	195
12 ounce regular soda	40	10	150
12 ounce vanilla latte	27	7	200
12 ounce sports drink	22	5.5	90
4 ounces sweetened applesauce	22	5.5	90
4 ounces pudding	19	5	120
6 ounces sweetened yogurt	18	5	150
1 cup sugar-sweetened cereal	17	4	180
4 ounce gelatin	16	4	70
Granola bar	15	4	124
1 pouch fruit snacks	10	2.5	80