



The Added Sugar Trap

Sugar (glucose) is the primary source of energy for our body. Our brain is also dependent on sugar as the main fuel. Although sugar occurs naturally in many fruits, vegetables and dairy foods, sugar is often added to many processed foods. It's no surprise this chemical compound is added to improve taste, but added sugar is also used to enhance color, bulk, and texture to foods as well as extend the shelf-life of many food products.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting calories from added sugar to no more than 10% each day. The estimated added sugar intake for Americans is currently 13%!

Why is added sugar a problem?

- **Weight Gain.** Each gram of sugar includes 4 calories and no added health benefits. Simply adding one teaspoon of sugar (4 grams) to your coffee adds 16 “empty” calories. These empty calories include no fiber, vitamins or minerals.
- **Tooth Decay.** Bacteria in your mouth feed on sugar and release acid byproducts which can cause tooth demineralization.
- **Risk of heart disease and diabetes.** An excessive amount of sugar can raise blood pressure and increase chronic inflammation, both of which are pathways to heart disease.

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Healthy Eating Continued...

Major Food Sources of Added Sugar

Learn what types of foods you may be eating often that contain added sugar:

- Soft drinks and fruit juices
- Refined carbohydrates such as white bread, pastries
- Dairy desserts
- Salad dressings, ketchup, spaghetti sauces

Know the “Secret” Names of Added Sugar

Be a detective. Read food labels to discover disguised added sugars. Watch out for ingredients such as:

- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Molasses
- Cane Sugar
- Honey
- Corn Sweetener
- Ingredients that end in “-ose”

Ways to Cut Back

The good news is cutting down on added sugar is easier than you think. Toss the table sugar and try these other ways to swap:

- Sweeten drinks and foods yourself. You are more likely to add less sugar.
- Eat fresh, frozen, or canned fruits in water or natural juice.
- Find substitutions. Instead of soft drinks, drink sparkling water or unsweetened teas.
- Compare food labels and choose products with the lower amounts of added sugars.

References:

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