

Understanding Natural vs. Added Sugars

Sugar occurs naturally in all foods that contain carbohydrates, such as fruits and vegetables, grains, and dairy. Plant foods contain **naturally occurring** sugar packaged along with fiber, essential minerals, and antioxidants. Dairy foods contain **naturally occurring** sugar, as well as protein and calcium.

ADDED SUGARS are sugars that food manufacturers add to products to increase flavor or extend shelf life. They are **NOT** naturally occurring in that food product. Sugar can be added to countless food products and can go by many names, including sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, cane syrup, concentrated fruit juice, agave nectar, and honey. Unless you consume only whole, unprocessed foods, you are bound to have some added sugars in your daily diet.

Health issues may occur when you consume too much **ADDED SUGAR**. *Added sugars provide excess calories and little nutritional benefit. Added sugars have been linked to health concerns including overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, inflammation, and cardiovascular disease.*

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting **ADDED SUGAR** to no more than 10% of calories each day.

The American Heart Association advises limiting added sugars daily to no more than:

Men — 9 teaspoons per day or 36 grams

Women and kids ages 2+ — 6 teaspoons per day or 24 grams (children under 2 should not consume any added sugars)

To put these numbers in perspective, one regular can of soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar or 40 grams of ADDED SUGAR!

Common Sources of Added Sugars Include:

Sugar-sweetened beverages: Regular soda – Energy/Sports drinks – Sweetened tea/coffee drinks – Juice drinks (unless they are 100% juice) – Flavored sweetened waters – Any other beverage with added sugars

Sugar-sweetened beverages contribute about **HALF of the total added sugar in the U.S. food supply. The source of the sweetness in most products is high-fructose corn syrup.*

Sweets and Desserts: Candy – Brownies – Cakes – Cupcakes – Pies – Cookies – Pastries – Doughnuts – Pudding – Ice Cream – Frozen Yogurt or other frozen desserts

Sweetened Breakfast Foods: Breakfast cereals – Oatmeal – Breakfast shakes – Cereal bars – Granola bars

Condiments: Ketchup – Relish – Barbeque Sauce – Salad dressings – Honey Mustard – Some Salsas

Habits to Avoid Added Sugars:

- Read the **NUTRITION FACTS LABEL** – Look for the amount of **ADDED SUGAR per serving**.
- Limit sugary drinks and foods.
- Avoid processed and convenience foods.
- Replace candy and desserts with naturally sweet fruit.
- Make meals at home without adding sugars.

Resources: American Heart Association. www.heart.org, American Diabetes Association. www.diabetes.org, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov

Dudley 508-949-6640, Franklin 508-520-1422, Milford 508-478-8102, Northbridge 508-234-2002, Southbridge 774-289-9438, Spencer 508-885-5767, Sutton 508-234-0703, Upton 508-529-9094, Uxbridge 774-482-6174, West Brookfield 508-867-1411

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