

LET'S GET STARTED

We live in a sugar-crazed world. The average American consumes 22 tsp. of added sugar every day, and young people consume even more! Often times, added sugar sneaks into our diets in the form of processed and prepared food.

So what's all the stir about? The fact is, sugar provides no nutritional benefits and it can take a serious toll on our health. This does not apply to the natural sugars in whole fruit, but rather, to the added sugar that comes lurking in our cereals, yogurts, cookies, drinks and other processed products. Consuming excess sugar is consistently linked to weight gain, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and liver and kidney disease.

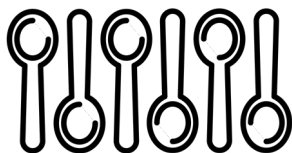
Another problem is that refined sugars are rapidly digested, causing a swift spike in our blood sugar. After that rapid swing upwards, our blood sugar then quickly drops, causing a vicious cycle of peaks and valleys which leads us to crave these foods even more. Sugary beverages are even more harmful as they are pure liquid sugar!

In this section, we'll show how much added sugar is too much and identify which foods to avoid to stay within these limits. We will also identify the many ways sugar can appear in our foods under various names and discover healthier options to reach for when you are craving a sweet treat. Best of all, you'll get to try some healthier dessert recipes that pack in some extra nutritional power while still satisfying your sweet tooth!

Daily Added Sugar Limits

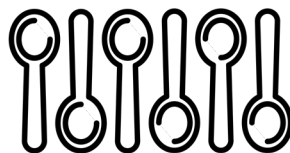
Added sugar should be kept to a minimum in our daily diet. To avoid the negative health effects of excess sugar consumption, follow these suggested daily limits for added sugar.

KIDS



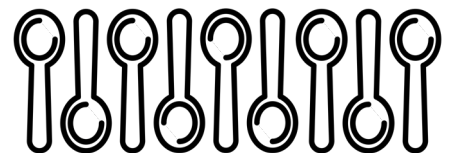
6 TEASPOONS
24 GRAMS
96 CALORIES

WOMEN



6 TEASPOONS
24 GRAMS
96 CALORIES

MEN



9 TEASPOONS
36 GRAMS
144 CALORIES

What are the “Great White Hazards”?

The following foods are digested rapidly causing undesirable surges in blood sugar. Dr. Ann Kulze, a noted wellness physician, recommends reduction of these items in one’s diet. Consider replacing these hazards with their suggested substitutes.



WHITE FLOUR PRODUCTS

EXAMPLES: White bread, bagels, biscuits, rolls, crackers, pancakes, pastas, pretzels, and pizza dough

SUBSTITUTES: Whole grain versions of these items (100% whole wheat or whole grain as main ingredient)



WHITE RICE

EXAMPLES: Arborio, basmati, jasmine, sticky, and white rice

SUBSTITUTES: Brown or black rices, wild rice



WHITE POTATOES

EXAMPLES: Fingerling, russet, yellow, yukon gold, and white potatoes

SUBSTITUTES: Sweet potatoes, red potatoes (cooked and chilled red potatoes have a lower glycemic index)



SWEETS

EXAMPLES: Cake, candy, cheesecake, chocolate, cookies, donuts, ice cream, muffins, and pie

SUBSTITUTES: Small portion of dark chocolate, fruit, or healthier desserts such as those in this section

Sugar - By All Its Names!

When looking for sugar on an ingredients list, it can be hard to find. Why? It sneaks in under different names. The following list provides some of the ways it is listed on packaging and suggestions for sweeteners that are better for health.

TABLE SUGAR

HONEY

FRUIT JUICE CONCENTRATE

MAPLE SYRUP

MOLASSES

RAW SUGAR

AGAVE SYRUP

BROWN SUGAR

HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP

DEXTROSE

CORN SYRUP

EVAPORATED CANE JUICE

BROWN RICE SYRUP

BEST SWEETENER OPTIONS:

Though these options have some added nutritional benefits that make them preferable to refined sugar, they should still be used only in small amounts.

- Black strap molasses
- Date sugar or paste (ground up dates - a whole food)
- Prune paste (loaded with antioxidants)
- Other natural sweeteners (not as good as above):
 - Honey (some antioxidant and antibacterial properties)
 - Cane sugars (less processed cane sugars)
 - Maple syrup
 - Agave syrup
 - Brown rice syrup

A NOTE ABOUT ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

The FDA has approved 5 artificial sweeteners: saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame and sucralose. There is one natural low-calorie sweetener approved – Stevia.

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a very respected consumer group in Washington DC, it may be prudent to “avoid” Saccharin, Aspartame (NutraSweet) and Acesulfame. They give a “caution” to Sucralose (Splenda). Better choices include Stevia leaf extracts, erythritol, Xylitol and Neotame.