

Sugar in Foods and Beverages

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

A diet high in sugary foods and drinks can lead to long term problems like weight gain and tooth decay for you and your child. Reading the Nutrition Facts label for added sugar content, and having sweets in moderation can help you monitor daily sugar intake.

What are added sugars?

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods and beverages when they are processed or prepared. Some added sugars include brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, and high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

You may also see other names used for added sugars that are not recognized by the FDA as an ingredient name. These include evaporated corn sweetener, fruit juice concentrate, crystal dextrose, glucose, liquid fructose, sugar cane juice, and fruit nectar.

What should I look for on food labels?

Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few items on the Nutrition Facts label. Some foods have more than one type of sugar in their ingredients. Sugar can be hidden in many forms. Some examples include corn sweetener, molasses, honey, and sucrose.

Limit added sugars to:

| Age | Tsp. per day | Grams per day |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Children to age 8 | 3-4 tsp | 12-16 g |
| Age 9-19 | 5-8 tsp | 20-32 g |
| Adult Men | 9 tsp | 36 g |
| Adult Women | 6 tsp | 24 g |

- Taken from American Heart Association

What are naturally occurring sugars?

Naturally occurring sugars are sugars that are naturally found in foods. These types of foods give you a variety of vitamins, minerals, and sometimes fiber which makes them a beneficial part of your diet. Examples of these include:

- Lactose, which is found in dairy products.
- Fructose, which is found in fruit.

The food label does not separate out natural from added sugar. For example, a 6oz container of yogurt has 12 g of naturally occurring sugar in the form of lactose. The food label for this yogurt reads 18 g, which means that 6g are added sugars. However, plain yogurt has no added sugar. A 6 oz. container has about 12 grams of naturally-occurring sugar in the form of lactose.

Fruit juice is not a healthy choice for children or adults. Although it does not have added sugars, it is better to get your fructose from eating fruit and not drinking fruit juice. If you do serve fruit juice, limit to 4 oz per day for children or 6 oz per day for adults.

What are some food and beverage sources of added sugars?

The major food and beverage sources of added sugars for Americans are:

- Sweetened drinks (regular soft drinks, energy drinks, and sports drinks)
- Breakfast cereals

- Candy
- Cakes and pastries
- Ice cream
- Condiments such as ketchup and barbecue sauce

How can I and my child stay in my daily recommended sugar limit?

- **Restrict intake of soda and other sugary drinks.** One soda can have as much as 12 tsp. of sugar (more than daily recommended amount).
- **Treat yourself or your child to sugary desserts occasionally.** Rather than keeping your house stocked with desserts, purchase a single serving so you aren't tempted to consume more than you should.
- **Choose whole grain products.** Products with whole grain as first ingredient tend to be lower in sugar. Also products higher in dietary fiber tend to be lower in sugar.
- **Add fruits to your diet.** They're naturally sweet, and they have fewer calories than sugary treats. Fruit also adds vitamins, minerals and fiber to your diet.

How can I learn more about sugar in foods and beverages?

You can call **Nutrition Services at 303-614-1070** and ask to speak to a dietitian, or visit kp.org and search "sugar."