Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or drinks at home or when they are processed or made in a factory. This does not include naturally occurring sugars, such as lactose found in milk and dairy products and fructose found in fruits.

**Too much added sugar can lead to many health problems**

These include:
- Weight gain
- Pre-diabetes
- Type 2 diabetes
- High cholesterol and high triglycerides, which increases your risk for high blood pressure and heart disease
- Chronic inflammation, which can worsen or contribute to many chronic diseases

**Examples of added sugar**

**At home:**
- Brown sugar added to oatmeal
- White sugar added to coffee
- Honey added to hot tea

**In processed foods:**
- Drinks, such as soda, tea, fruit punch and sports drinks
- Cereals – both dry cereals, like bran flakes, and cooked cereals, like oatmeal
- Meal replacement or snack bars
- Yogurts and smoothies
- Flavored milk
- Jam and jelly
- Some condiments, such as ketchup, barbecue sauce and salad dressings
- Sweet treats, such as cookies, pies, chocolate, candy, ice cream, muffins and doughnuts

*The Ohio State University*  
Wexner Medical Center  
wexnermedical.osu.edu
Reduce Added Sugar in Your Diet

Guidelines for added sugar

Your body does not need added sugar for survival or to function well. However, most of us like to have a sweet treat occasionally. Rather than trying to avoid added sugar entirely, it can be helpful to have an idea of how much is too much.

- The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends less than 10% of calories come from added sugar.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends less than 10% of calories come from added sugar, but that reducing added sugar to less than 5% of calories provides more health benefits.

Use the chart to help turn these percentages into grams, teaspoons and calories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total calories</th>
<th>10% sugar in grams</th>
<th>10% sugar in teaspoons</th>
<th>10% sugar in calories</th>
<th>5% sugar in grams</th>
<th>5% sugar in teaspoons</th>
<th>5% sugar in calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

If you need 1,800 calories per day:

- Your added sugar intake should be less than 45 grams, about 11 teaspoons or 180 calories per day. Added sugars would be 10% of your calories per day.
- Limiting added sugars to 22.5 grams, 5½ teaspoons or 90 calories per day would provide more health benefits. Added sugars would be 5% of your calories per day.

Regardless of calorie intake, the American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugar to:

- 100 calories or 25 grams per day for most women
- 150 calories or 38 grams per day for most men
Finding sugar on food labels

Current labels do not list naturally occurring sugar and added sugar separately. They are listed together on one line for sugars. This makes it hard to know exactly how much added sugar is in some food products.

New labels will list added sugar. Most food products will have the new label by mid to late 2020. Some products are already using the new label.

If a food product has the current label, you would need to look at its ingredient list on the food label to find out if the 12 grams of sugar is naturally occurring or added. Naturally occurring sugar comes from milk, yogurt and fruit. Added sugar can come from many different types of sugar. These include:

- Agave syrup
- Agave nectar
- Brown sugar
- Cane crystals
- Coconut sugar
- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Crystalline fructose
- Dextrose
- Evaporated cane juice
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Glucose / glucose syrup
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Invert sugar
- Malt syrup
- Maple syrup
- Molasses
- Raw sugar
- Sucrose
- Syrup
- Turbinado sugar
Often, the sugar in a food product includes a mix of both naturally occurring sugar and added sugar. Until the new label is available on all products, it is hard to know how much is added and how much is naturally occurring. However, if the food has no milk, yogurt or fruit in its ingredients, you can assume that all of its sugar is added sugar.

Sometimes you can compare unsweetened or plain products to a sweetened version to find out the amount of added sugar. For example:

**Label for cinnamon applesauce:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size 1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Per Serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 0mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 70mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 25g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 23g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 0g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Label for no sugar added applesauce:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size 1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Per Serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 0mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 0mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 13g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 11g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 0g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sugar difference between the two labels is 12 grams (23 grams minus 11 grams). This means that the cinnamon applesauce has 12 grams of added sugar. **Added sugar is often 4 to 5 grams per teaspoon,** depending on the source, so the cinnamon applesauce has 2½ to 3 teaspoons of added sugar in each ½ cup serving!
Tips for reducing added sugar in your diet

- Read food labels and look at the added sugar. **Aim for 5 grams of added sugar or less per serving.** You will be more successful at reducing added sugar in your diet if your pantry is stocked with foods that are low in added sugar.

- Avoid buying or limit foods high in added sugars like many cereals, granola and cereal bars, sweets and dessert items, and sugary beverages like soda, sweet tea, fruit punch and juices.

- Eat a whole piece of fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.

- Choose plain water most often along with milk and plain tea or coffee as beverages.

- Add a squeeze of a wedge of lemon, lime or orange to water for flavor.

- Cook more foods from scratch if you can’t find low sugar options. Try making your own granola, pasta sauce and desserts.

- When indulging in desserts or sweet treats, choose the smallest size available or share. Eat slowly and savor.

- Learn to love dark chocolate – the darker the chocolate, the less sugar it contains.

- Give your taste buds time to adjust to less sweetness. Foods may not taste “normal” when you start eating less sugar, but overtime, they will.

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Remember, we do not need any sugar in our diet. It is best to limit sugar to lower inflammation and avoid chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.