



# MDwise

*A McLaren Company*

## Added Sugars

### Table of Contents

- Overview
- Credits

### Overview

---

Foods like milk and fruits have naturally occurring sugars. Added sugars are those that don't occur naturally in a food or drink but are added during processing or preparation. They add calories but little nutrition. They can cause weight gain.

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans strongly recommend limiting foods and drinks that contain added sugars.<sup>1</sup>
- The American Heart Association recommends that children and teens have less than 6 teaspoons of added sugars a day and no more than 8 ounces of sugary drinks a week.<sup>2</sup>

Many packaged or processed foods and drinks have added sugars. The best way to know if an item contains added sugar is to look at the ingredients list on the label. Ingredients are listed in order by weight. The Nutrition Facts label lists both total and added sugar per serving. It's a good way to know how much sugar you're getting.

### Avoiding added sugars

Sugars are often added when foods and drinks are processed or prepared. Use these tips to limit foods and drinks with added sugars.

- Be alert with processed foods.  
Added sugars are common in:
  - Drinks such as regular soda, fruit juice, sports drinks, and energy drinks.
  - Desserts such as cakes, cookies, pies, ice cream, and candy.
  - Many foods, including bread, yogurt, baked beans, and tomato sauce.
  - Condiments such as ketchup and salad dressing.
- Don't be fooled by "health foods."  
Some of them may be low in saturated fat and salt but still have a lot of sugar. For example, look out for sugar in:
  - Cereal, granola, crackers, and nutrition bars.

- Fat-free cookies, candies, chips, and frozen treats.
- Foods that have reduced sodium (salt) or fat.
- Read food labels carefully.  
**Check the ingredients list.**  
These lists are ordered by weight. If you see sugar (or another name for sugar) listed early in the ingredients list, that food has more sugar in it compared to the ingredients that follow it.

**Check the Nutrition Facts label.**

This lists both total and added sugar. It's a good way to know how much sugar you are getting.

- Watch out for hidden sugars.  
Added sugars are not always called "sugar," so it can be hard to identify them in foods. Look for these words in the ingredients:
  - Agave syrup.
  - Corn sweetener.
  - Corn syrup.
  - High-fructose corn syrup.
  - Evaporated cane juice.
  - Fruit juice concentrate.
  - Dextrose.
  - Fructose.
  - Glucose.
  - Lactose.
  - Maltose.
  - Sucrose.
  - Honey.
  - Molasses.
  - Syrup.

## Credits

---

**Current as of: September 8, 2021**

**Author: Healthwise Staff**

**Medical Review:**

**Kathleen Romito MD - Family Medicine**

**John Pope MD - Pediatrics**

**Rhonda O'Brien MS, RD, CDE - Certified Diabetes Educator**

---

Note: The "printer friendly" document will not contain all the information available in the online document. Some information (e.g. cross-references to other topics, definitions or medical illustrations) is only available in the online version.

---



This information does not replace the advice of a doctor. Healthwise, Incorporated, disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.

© 1995-2022 Healthwise, Incorporated. Healthwise, Healthwise for every health decision, and the Healthwise logo are trademarks of Healthwise, Incorporated.