

From the Food Bank Kitchen



Sugar Overload

Take a guess how many teaspoons of **ADDED SUGARS** the average American now consumes daily in soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks, energy drinks, coffee drinks, cupcakes, cookies, muffins, doughnuts, granola bars, chocolate, ice cream, sweetened yogurts, cereal, and candy? The list of sweet temptations we encounter is endless. The average American now consumes 22 to 28 teaspoons of added sugars daily – mostly high-fructose corn syrup and ordinary table sugar (sucrose). This translates to 350 to 400 empty calories that many of us can't afford. There is strong evidence linking sugar-sweetened beverages to risk of being overweight. In addition, recent studies show that extra calories in the diet from sugar are more likely than other calories to aim for your waist (visceral fat) and the liver.

HOW MUCH SUGAR IS RECOMMENDED AS A MAXIMUM?

Most women should get no more than 100 calories (6.5 tsp or 26 grams) a day from added sugars. Men should get no more than 150 calories (9.5 tsp, or 38 grams), roughly what's in a 12 oz can of Coke. Cutting back to these levels of sugar may result in slimmer waistlines and a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, gout, high blood pressure, and high triglycerides. A 2010 article in [Diabetes Care](#) found that each 12 oz. serving per day of a sugar-sweetened beverage raises one's risk for diabetes by 15 percent. A long-term study of 88,000 nurses cites that those who consumed at least two sugar-sweetened beverages a day had a 35 percent higher risk of heart attack than those who drank less than one per month.

WHAT WORDS ON A LABEL INDICATE SUGARS?

If sugar is listed as the 1st, 2nd or 3rd ingredient, the product probably contains a large amount of sugar as a sweetener. Other names for sugar include sucrose, brown sugar, honey, glucose, agave, dextrose, corn syrup, invert sugar, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, lactose, maltose, maple syrup, malt syrup, molasses, and fruit juice concentrate. One category of sweeteners is called SUGAR ALCOHOLS such as xylitol, mannitol, sorbitol, maltitol, and erythritol. These do contain calories but are lower in calories than regular sugar. They are found in many processed foods and such as chocolate, candy, frozen desserts, chewing gum, baked goods and fruit spreads. There are also artificial sweeteners with no calories.

HOW CAN YOU CUT DOWN ON SUGAR?

Don't drink sugar-sweetened beverages. Limit fruit juices to no more than 1 cup a day. Buy fresh fruit or canned fruit packed in juice or light syrup, or rinse fruits packed in heavy syrup in a colander. Don't worry about naturally occurring sugars in fruit, milk, and plain yogurt. Add less sugar to homemade baked goods as well as to coffee, tea, and breakfast cereals. If a food has little or no milk or fruit (which contain natural sugars), the "Sugars" number on the package's Nutrition Facts panel will tell you how many grams of added sugars are in each serving. Multiply the grams of sugar by 4 to get the calories from sugar in food. Divide the grams of sugar by 4 to calculate the number of teaspoons of sugar.

Sweet Somethings

Here's how many teaspoons of added sugar you'd get in a few popular foods (these numbers don't include the naturally occurring sugars in fruit or milk ingredients).

<u>Sugar (tsp)</u>		<u>Sugar (tsp)</u>	
Dunkin Donuts Choc. Chip Muffin	14	Mega Monster Energy Drink 24 oz	20
Cinnabon classic roll	15	Coca-Cola 12 oz	10
Hershey 1.5 oz. bar	4	Ginger ale 12 oz	8
Dannon vanilla yogurt 6 oz	3.5	Snapple lemon tea 16 oz	10.5
Krispy Kreme Glazed Choc. Cake Donut	6.5	Minute Maid lemonade 20 oz	17
Junior Mints, theatre size 4 oz	22.5	Sunkist Orange Soda 20 oz	21
Vitamin Water 32 oz xxx acai berry	12	Starbucks vanilla latte 16 oz	4
Tropicana cranberry juice blend 10 oz	9	Gatorade Perform Lemon-Lime 20 oz	9
Red Bull Energy Drink 8.4 oz	7	7-11 Cherry Slurpee 8 oz	4.5

Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest, [Nutrition Action](#), April 2012 and Feb 2010