

The Facts about Sugar in Your Kid's Diet

INFO FOR PARENTS

Expertise in Matters of the Heart

Learning more about sugar and its sources are important to help guide your child's diet. Here are some facts:

Sugar is a carbohydrate and contains 4 calories per gram or 16 calories per teaspoon.

There are 4 grams of sugar in 1 teaspoon

Sugar contains no nutrients other than calories – there are no vitamins, minerals, protein or fat in sugar. The body cannot tell the difference between processed sugar (white or brown sugar, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup) and “natural” sugar (raw sugar, molasses, maple sugar, fruit sugar/ juice/fructose/lactose/maltose, evaporated cane juice or honey). Adding any of these sugars will add calories but little if any nutrients to foods and beverages.

Foods high in *added* sugar, such as soda, juice drinks, punch, desserts, candy, and many cereals marketed for children, generally contain little nutrition, are high in calories, and may contribute to tooth decay as well as obesity and other diseases.

Some foods high in sugar, such as fruits and 100% fruit juice, are lower in calories, high in nutrients and therefore should be the main “sweet” foods in a healthy diet.



The USDA currently recommends that added sugars make up no more than 10% of a person's daily calories. See the table below for specific recommendations:

Age of Child	Maximum Amount of Added Sugar per Day
6 years	9 teaspoons (36 grams)
7-9 years	10 teaspoons (40 grams)
10 years and older	12 teaspoons (48 grams)

EXAMPLES OF FOODS HIGH IN SUGAR:

Food/Beverage	Natural Sugar	Average Added Sugar
Soda, regular	0	6.75 tsp per 8 oz
	0	10 tsp per 12 oz can
	0	17 tsp per 20 oz bottle
Lemonade, premixed (MinuteMaid)	0	7.5 tsp per 8 oz
Fruit Punch/Juice Drinks (CapriSun, SunnyD)	0	6 tsp per 8 ½ oz juice box
Frosted or Sweetened Cereals	0	3 tsp per ¾-1 cup serving
Granola Bar, Chewy Choc. Chip	2 tsp per 0.8 oz bar	1.75 tsp per 0.8 oz bar
Fruit Flavored Lowfat Yogurt	3 tsp per 8 oz	8 tsp per 8 oz.
Yogurt Drinks (Danimals)	1.5 tsp per 3.1 oz btl	2 tsp per 3.1 oz btl
Lowfat Chocolate Milk	3 tsp per 8 oz	4 tsp per 8 oz
Plain 1% Milk or Lowfat Yogurt	3 tsp per 8oz	0
100% Fruit Juice	5 tsp per 8 oz	0

For more information, go to the USDA Database for Added Sugar for Selected Foods at: http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/add_sug/addsug01.pdf