



Toolbox Talks

Sneaky Sugar

Finding Added Sugars in Food

Unfortunately, you can't tell easily by looking at the nutrition facts panel of a food if it contains added sugars. The line for "sugars" includes both added and natural sugars. Naturally occurring sugars are found in milk (lactose) and fruit (fructose). Any product that contains milk (such as yogurt, milk or cream) or fruit (fresh, dried) contains some natural sugars. Reading the ingredient list on a processed food's label can tell you if the product contains added sugars, but not the exact amount if the product also contains natural sugars.

Names for added sugars on labels include:

- Brown Sugar
- Corn Sweetener
- Corn Syrup
- Fruit Juice Concentrates
- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Honey
- Invert Sugar
- Lact Sugar
- Molasses
- Natural Sugar
- Sugar molecules ending in -ose (fructose, glucose, etc.)
- Sugar
- Syrup

Keep in mind that if the product has no fruit or milk products in the ingredients, all of the sugars in the food are from added sugars. If the product contains fruit or milk products, the total sugar per serving listed on the label will include added and naturally occurring sugars. Although sugars are not harmful in small amounts to the body, our bodies don't need sugars to function properly. Added sugars contribute additional calories and zero nutrients to food.

Over the past 30 years, Americans have steadily consumed more and more added sugars in their diets, which has contributed to the obesity epidemic. Reducing the amount of added sugars we eat cuts calories and can help you improve your heart health and control your weight.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Does "sugar free" really mean there's no sugar?
Sugar free means that there is less than .05% g of sugar per serving. Make sure you're paying attention to serving sizes, too!

What does "reduced sugar" mean?

Reduced sugar means there is at least 25% less sugars per serving compared to a standard serving size.

Discussion Questions:

- How often do you look at nutrition labels for added sugar?
- Where do you think you get the most sugar in your diet?