

SUGAR SHOCK!



Did you know that sugar is added to many of the packaged foods we eat every day? That includes nutritious foods like yogurt, wheat bread, peanut butter, and granola bars. Most children eat far more than the recommended amount of sugar—which is no more than 5 teaspoons—every day. Diets high in sugar put kids at risk for obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay, plus sugar makes it harder for kids to focus in school and sleep at night. Making even small changes to your family's sugar consumption can provide a lifetime of health benefits!

Tips for Managing Sugar Intake:

- 1 Limit sodas, sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- 2 Read labels and choose foods with fewer added sugars. For example, opt for Cheerios or Special K in the morning instead of Fruit Loops or Trix.
- 3 Eat a fruit or veggie before having a treat. This helps your body get the nutrients you need and can fill you up so you don't eat too many sweets.
- 4 Limit treats to no more than one a day.

The Many Names of Sugar ...

To find out if sugar has been added to a food, check the ingredient list at the bottom of the Nutrition Facts Label. Here are some of the (many!) names for sugar:

Sucrose Corn Syrup Barley Malt High Fructose Corn Syrup
Fructose Dextrose Maltodextrin Cane juice
Glucose Molasses Maple Syrup Honey

Adding it Up

The amount of sugar a food contains is listed on the Nutrition Facts Label. This is usually measured in grams, which can be hard to understand. To get a better sense of how much sugar is in a food, divide the number of grams by

4

That will show the teaspoons of sugar. Get kids involved in calculating teaspoons of sugar and see if you can slowly reduce your family's total sugar intake. How low can you go?

Don't worry about the natural sugars that occur in fruits, veggies, and white milk. Your body absorbs these more slowly than refined sugars and these foods have many important benefits for your health. Be aware that dried fruit is extremely high in sugar (and may have extra sugar added to it) and should be eaten in small quantities!

Sources: buildhealthykids.com, choosemyplate.gov, mayoclinic.org