



22.7

teaspoons a day

This is how much sugar the average American eats each day. Even without dipping into a sugar bowl, it's not hard to hit that total because of the sugars in processed foods (examples below). Though sugar consumption has dropped since 1999, we're still wildly exceeding the recommended limit (right).

LIFE-SIZE ILLUSTRATION

Sugars added to processed foods enhance flavor and texture. They also act as a preservative to extend shelf life.

1 tsp = 4.2 g



Beef and pork bologna,
4 slices, 1.18 tsp sugar



Wheat bread,
2 slices, 0.66 tsp



Lucky Charms, 1 cup, 2.55 tsp



Ketchup, 3 tbsp, 1.77 tsp



Oreo cookies, 3 cookies, 2.49 tsp



Lowfat fruit yogurt, 8 oz, 6.16 tsp

TYPES OF ADDED SUGAR CONSUMED, U.S. daily average



SUCROSE

(11.6 tsp, 51%)

Granulated cane or beet sugar is stirred into coffee and tea and used in baking.

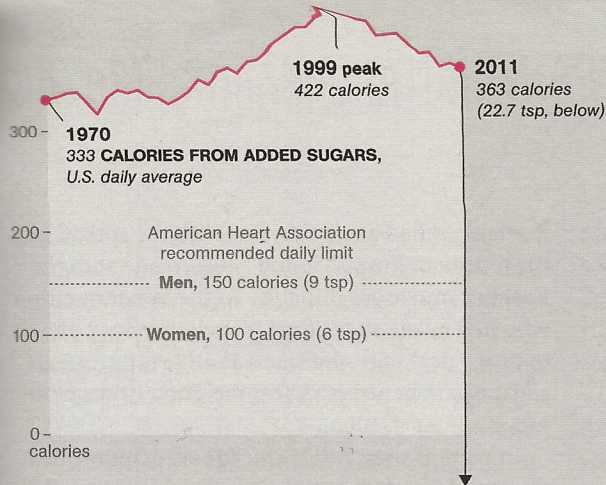
Consists of:



Fructose

Glucose

The problem with fructose Found in small amounts in fruits and vegetables—and in each type of sugar shown here—fructose in excess is a health hazard. The glucose in sugar is metabolized throughout the body. But fructose is processed mainly in the liver into fats, which can build up there and also enter the blood. The resulting risks: obesity, hypertension, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes.



DIAGNOSED DIABETES

Almost all the cases in this epidemic spike are type 2 diabetes, once called adult-onset diabetes.

1973

2% of the population, 4.2 million Americans

2010

7%,
21.1 million Americans

Can of cola, 12 oz, 7.93 tsp

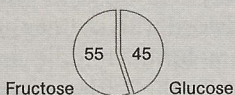


22.7 tsp equal the natural sugar contained in each of the following:
7 red apples 454 eggs 1,135 cups of rice 27 ears of corn



HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP (8.2 tsp, 36%)

Made cheap by government corn subsidies, it was first added to processed food in the 1970s.



OTHER SWEETENERS (3 tsp,* 13%)

Honey, maple syrup, and molasses have slight traces of vitamins and minerals.



*Numbers do not equal 22.7 tsp due to rounding.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION:
ROBERT CLARK; LAWSON
PARKER, NGM STAFF;
AMANDA HOBBS;
ALEJANDRO TUMAS
SOURCES: USDA;
CDC (DIABETES)