

Sugar

Sugar is not needed by the body yet we crave it. With time sugar can become a habit. The more we eat the more we want. Added sugar is hiding in **74% of packaged foods**, some we think are healthy such as yogurt and energy bars. Here are some tips to help you kick sugar cravings to the curb.

1. Read nutrition labels and ingredients lists

Paying attention to nutrition labels can help you to become more aware of how much added sugar you are consuming.

- Make sure there is a **1:1 sugar-fibre ratio** (ex: If there is *3 grams of sugar* you would want about *3 grams of fibre*).

Check the ingredients list and try to **avoid** products that:

- Have sugar in the first 3 ingredients
- Have many forms of sugar in the list

You do not always see the word “sugar” on the ingredients list.

Other names include:

- Agave nectar
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Cane juice
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Dextrose
- Glucose
- Lactose
- Cane syrup
- Malt syrup
- Molasses
- Sucrose
- Brown rice syrup

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 40
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

2. Avoid Artificial Sweeteners

Sugar substitutes are not healthy options; they are chemicals our bodies cannot recognize. Artificial sweeteners can cause:

- **Weight gain.** A sweet taste releases insulin, which normally removes excess sugar and stores it in the tissue. Since artificial sweeteners do not increase blood sugar levels, blood sugar becomes low causing the person to think they are hungry and increase their food intake.
- **Sugar cravings.** Since sugar substitutes are still sweet they do not help you learn to reduce your reliance on sweets, or retrain your taste buds. You may still experience sugar cravings, causing you to consume more sugar and sugar substitutes.

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3. Combat Cravings

- **Do not keep junk food in the house.** Instead keep your fruit bowl well stocked and always have healthy snacks in the fridge, such as carrot sticks and grapes. If you feel your craving creeping up, just grab a handful of nuts and a big glass of water.
- **Do something unrelated to food.** Cravings generally last about 10 minutes so if you feel one coming on do something else (ex. play a game, go for a walk, take a bath, etc.)
- **Do something else that gives you pleasure.** Cravings are psychological. That chocolate bar releases feel-good hormones in our brain telling us that we need it. Exercise also releases those same pleasurable hormones, so try doing 10 minutes of physical activity to kick that craving to the curb, and burn calories at the same time.
- **Eat a healthy breakfast.** Skipping breakfast might seem like a great way to cut calories but in reality it's like running your car on empty. With no fuel, blood sugar levels drop, resulting in cravings for fast, quick energy (sugar). A healthy breakfast should contain at least 5 grams of fibre and 5 grams of protein. Try steel cut oatmeal and a delicious green smoothie.
- **Retrain your taste buds.** It can take up to 10-15 tastes of a certain food before a person will start to appreciate the new taste. Give new foods 5 small bites each time you try them, or try cooking them with spices or pairing them with more flavourful food such as garlic, chilies, or ginger. Try sautéing spinach with sweet red peppers, or enhancing asparagus with garlic.

Tiny Habits for Sugar Control

- I will add one food that is healthy _____ and cut one sugary food that is unhealthy _____
- I will consume protein packed foods at every meal such as _____
- I will drink water, herbal teas, or green tea instead of sugar drinks such as pop and juice.
- I will choose foods that have a 1:1 sugar-fiber ratio.
- When I have a sugar craving I will distract myself by (circle all that apply: chewing gum, taking a shower, going for a walk, having a piece of fruit/vegetables, eating a handful of nuts/seeds, other: _____)
- I will pass on dessert after dinner or have a piece of fruit.