

# Sugar, Sugar, Everywhere

## Why should I limit sugar?

When you eat too many foods high in added sugar, you crowd out the more nutritious foods that provide the nutrients you need to stay healthy. Foods high in added sugar are also often high in calories and fat. This can lead to eating too many calories and cause weight gain.

## How much sugar is too much?

The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugar to 25 grams (6 teaspoons) per day. One package of peanut m&m's or 8 ounces of lemon-lime soda are examples of 25 grams of sugar.

## What counts as an added sugar?

- Sugar added in cooking or at the table
- Sugar added to processed and prepared foods
- Sugar added in beverages

## Where is the all the sugar coming from?

The average child consumes 23 teaspoons of sugar a day. That equals 92 grams of sugar. Almost half the sugar children consume comes from sweetened beverages, such as sodas, fruit drinks, and sports drinks. One fourth comes from sweet desserts like candy, cookies, cake, ice cream, and sweetened breakfast cereal. The remaining fourth is from sugar added in cooking and in processed and packaged foods.

## Ways to decrease sugar in your diet

- ◆ Buy fresh fruits or fruits canned in natural juice.
- ◆ Add fruit instead of sugar to cereal or oatmeal.
- ◆ Cut the sugar by one-fourth to one-third when baking cookies, brownies, or cakes.
- ◆ Some spices and flavorings have a sweet taste and can help eliminate the need for added sugar (e.g. cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla extract, almond extract).
- ◆ Use unsweetened applesauce as a substitute for sugar in recipes.
- ◆ Make your own oatmeal instead of using oatmeal packets.
- ◆ Limit flavored beverages such as juices and other sweetened beverages.
- ◆ Skip sugary and frosted cereals.
- ◆ Choose fruit for dessert instead of cakes, cookies, and other sweets.
- ◆ Snack on vegetables, fruits, low-fat cheese, and whole grain crackers.

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## Watch out for these common names of added sugars:

- ◆ agave nectar
  - ◆ fructose
  - ◆ high-fructose corn syrup
  - ◆ honey
  - ◆ rice/corn/maple/malt/golden/palm syrup
  - ◆ corn sweetener
  - ◆ maltose
  - ◆ sucrose
  - ◆ glucose
  - ◆ molasses
  - ◆ juice concentrate
  - ◆ dextrose
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### Association for Child Development

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