

# Downloads: Registered Dietitian Toolkit for Sugar in Balance



DOWNLOAD FULL TOOLKIT

## Social Graphics

Download ready-made social media graphics to share the facts about real sugar and its role in a balanced diet. Note: Some are intended to be shared as a carousel.

Life is sweet. Keep it balanced.



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**Sugar is a Partner in Nutrient Delivery**

**HIGH-FIBER CEREAL**  
Sugar cuts the bitter flavors of high-fiber cereal, making it more enjoyable to eat.

**STRAWBERRY YOGURT**  
A little sugar cuts the acidity and enhances the sweetness of the strawberries in calcium-rich yogurt.

**CANNED VEGETABLES**  
A little sugar helps maintain the color and texture of canned vegetables and increases shelf-life, making them an accessible and enjoyable option for meeting food group needs.

**SALAD DRESSING**  
A little sugar cuts the acidity of the vinegar in salad dressing, contributes to the smooth/creamy texture, extends shelf-life and enhances the flavors of the spices as well as the other ingredients of the salad it dresses.

**PEANUT BUTTER**  
A little sugar enhances the flavor and extends the shelf-life of protein-packed peanut butter.

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**What are the sources of added sugars in the diet?**

Total Calories in the Diet

13% Added Sugars

19% Soft Drinks  
19% Desserts & Snacks  
11% Sugar-Sweetened Beverages  
7% Cakes & Pastries  
7% Other  
4% Ice Creams & Frozen Dairy Desserts  
4% Fruit Flavors  
3% Candy

**19% Desserts & Snacks**

Ice Creams & Frozen Dairy Desserts: 5%  
Cakes & Pastries: 4%  
Other: 1%

**24% Sugar-Sweetened Beverages**

Soft Drinks: 16%  
Fruit Flavors: 5%  
Other: 1%

**24% Sugar-Sweetened Beverages**

Soft Drinks: 16%  
Fruit Flavors: 5%  
Other: 1%

**Carbohydrates are found in many foods**

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**Keep portions in check with these tips and tricks!**

**Use smaller plates and bowls for meals and snacks.**

**Serve yourself using a measuring cup to know exactly how much is going on your plate.**

**Keep food off the counters and in your pantry. Out of sight, out of mind.**

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# Printable Infographics

Download infographics for sharing online or printing hard copies for clients.

Based on building healthy dietary patterns that include enough recommended food groups and stay within calorie limits, the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting added sugars to up to 10% of total calories (50 grams or 12 teaspoons of added sugars per day in a 2,000-calorie diet).

**What does a daily diet with 10% of calories from added sugars look like?**  
Here's one example! (Based on a 2,000-calorie diet)

Meal	Food	Added Sugars
Breakfast	Coffee, milk or juice (no added sugar)	0 grams
	Oatmeal (2 tablespoons of brown sugar)	8 grams
Lunch	Turkey sandwich on whole-grain bread	6 grams
	Fresh fruit and raw vegetables	0 grams
Snack	Mixed nuts	0 grams
	Yogurt (3.2 ounces)	9 grams
Dinner	Spaghetti and meatballs (no cup of sauce)	3 grams
	Salad with dressing (2 tablespoons)	3 grams
Dessert	Chocolate chip cookie	15 grams

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition, December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

**Sugar** addict

**Life sweet. balanced.**

**SUGAR'S FUNCTIONAL ROLES IN FOOD BEYOND SWEETNESS**

	FLAVOR ENHANCER, BALANCE, AROMA	BULK	TEXTURE/MOISTURE	SELF-LIFE/MICROBIAL STABILITY	FERMENTATION	FREEZING POINT DEPRESSION	COLOR	MOISTURE RETENTION
Dairy Products	●	●	●	●	●			
Whole-Grain, Fiber-Rich Breads & Cereals	●	●	●	●	●			
Breads	●	●	●	●	●			
Bakery Products	●	●	●	●	●			
Salad Dressings, Sauces and Seasonings	●	●	●	●	●			
Preserves & Pickling	●	●	●	●	●			
Jams & Jellies	●	●	●	●	●			
Canned Fruits & Vegetables	●	●	●	●	●			
Prepared Foods	●	●	●	●	●			
Beverages	●	●	●	●	●			
Frozen Beverages	●	●	●	●	●			
Fermented Beverages	●	●	●	●	●			
Ice Cream	●	●	●	●	●			
Confectionery	●	●	●	●	●			

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**5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SUGAR**

**SUGAR ADDS FLAVOR** that helps people eat a wide variety of foods, plus it has many other important functions.

**REAL SUGAR IS MADE FROM SUGAR CANE AND SUGAR BEETS** grown on farms.

**SUGAR IS A SOURCE OF GLUCOSE**, a primary fuel for the body.

**SUGAR GOES FROM PLANT TO PRODUCT IN JUST FOUR SIMPLE STEPS:** It is extracted from the plant, washed with water, crystallized and dried.

**THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS\* RECOMMEND LIMITING ADDED SUGARS** to 12 teaspoons or 50 grams per day.\*

Sugar has 15 calories per teaspoon and 4 calories per gram.

\*Based on 2,000-calorie diet.

1. [www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt](https://www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt)  
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition, December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

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**Sugar Is a Partner in Nutrient Delivery**

**HIGH-FIBER CEREAL**  
Sugar can help boost fiber in high-fiber cereal, making it more enjoyable to eat.

**STRAWBERRY YOGURT**  
A little sugar can help the acidity and tartness of natural strawberries and enhance the sweetness of low-fat yogurt.

**CANNED VEGETABLES**  
A little sugar helps maintain the color and texture of canned vegetables and increases shelf-life, making them an affordable and enjoyable option for meeting food group needs.

**SALAD DRESSING**  
A little sugar in salad dressings can help the vinegar and oil emulsify, contributing to the creamy texture. Sugar also helps balance the acidity and enhances the flavor of the dressing as well as the other ingredients of the salad's dressing.

**PEANUT BUTTER**  
A little sugar can help the acidity and tartness of natural peanuts and enhance the sweetness of low-fat peanut butter.

**PRE-PACKAGED SNACKS**  
A little sugar helps maintain the color and texture of pre-packaged snacks and enhances the flavor of the snacks as well as the other ingredients of the snack's dressing.

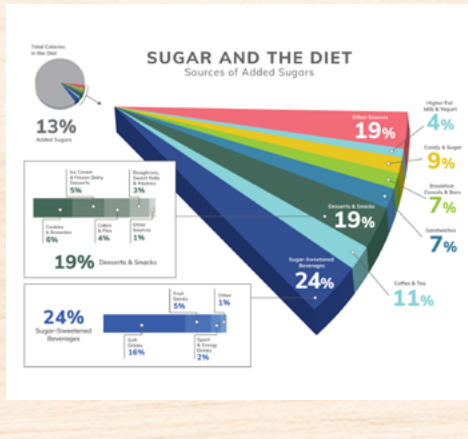
**Sugar's Functional Roles in Food Beyond Sweetness**

Food Category	Added Sugars	Artificial Sweeteners	Alcohol	Organic Acids	Salts	Emulsifiers	Preservatives	Colorants	Flavorings
Bakery Products	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
White Bread, Pasta, Rice, Beans & Lentils	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ice Cream	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bakery Products	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salad Dressings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prepackaged Snacks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Preservatives & Pickling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jams & Jellies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Processed Meats	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Processed Beverages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Processed Snacks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Processed Meats	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Processed Beverages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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**Life Sweet. Keep It balanced.**

**Sugar**

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**Common Questions About Sugar in the Diet**

**How much sugar can I have in a healthy diet?**

Sugar plays a role in healthy, balanced diets by adding flavor and function that help people enjoy a wide variety of foods. Because of this, the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommend that healthy dietary patterns can include up to 50 grams or 12 teaspoons of added sugar per day.<sup>1</sup>

**How can I tell how much added sugars are in my food?**

Added sugars are easy to find on Nutrition Facts labels. They are listed under Total Sugar, where you'll find the grams of added sugars per serving in the product and the percent daily value or how much that product contributes to the total recommended intake for a day. For example, a product with 7.5 grams of added sugars per serving represents 15% of the total 50-gram daily value for one day.

**Why are sugars added to foods that don't need to be sweet?**

Sugar has many functional properties that range from balancing acidity or adding bulk to preventing spoilage. For example, in whole-grain, fiber-rich bread, sugar balances bitter flavors, contributes to the texture, feeds the yeast to help the bread rise, aids in browning, helps with moisture retention and increases shelf life.

**What does a diet with 10% of calories from added sugars look like?**

The 10% target for added sugars intake provided by the DGA applies throughout the day or week, not as a limit to be applied to individual products.

Here is one example (based on a 2,000-calorie diet):

**Are reduced-sugar or sugar-free options better for you?**

When sugar is removed from a food, new ingredients (usually more than one) must be added to replace both the flavor and functionality of sugar. These ingredients often have the same amount of or even more calories than sugar. So, you should not assume less sugar means fewer calories.

**1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 10th Edition. December 2020. Available at: [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).**

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**9 misunderstandings about SUGAR**

**MYTH**  
Sugar is hidden in food.

**FACT**  
For the past three decades, sugar has been found on the ingredient list of many foods and beverages. Food for good reason. Unless you cook a lot from scratch, you may not be familiar with all of the functional roles that sugar plays in so many products. Sugar is so much more than the sweet taste we know so well.

**MYTH**  
"Natural" sugar plays more reduced calories.

**FACT**  
When sugar is removed from a food, there are new ingredients (usually more than one) added to take its place to replace both the flavor and functionality of sugar. These ingredients often bring the same or even more calories to a product than sugar alone. The bottom line is that less sugar means fewer calories, compare products. Really, to see what the entire nutrient package of a product is.

**MYTH**  
Sugar has only 15 calories per teaspoon.

**FACT**  
Your body handles sugar the same regardless of what color it comes in. Raw sugar, brown sugar and any white sugars are all processed the same in the body. Darker colors are often very low in calories, but the same amount of calories is on the sugar crystals. The nutrients that are contained in this amount of calories are so small that they offer no real nutritional value.

**MYTH**  
"Raw" sugar is healthier than table sugar.

**FACT**  
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**MYTH**  
Sugar is a high glycemic food.

**FACT**  
Sugar has a moderate impact on blood glucose, lower than a baked potato.

**MYTH**  
Americans consume more added sugars now than ever.

**FACT**  
USDA data show that added sugars intake decreased by more than 30% from 2000 to 2018.

**MYTH**  
Sugar causes chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

**FACT**  
Excess calories from all food and beverages, including sugars, can lead to weight gain, increasing the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases but research does not show a direct link between sugar and any of these conditions.

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**3**

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**6**

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**8**

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**Sugar and Diabetes**

Carbohydrates, fat and protein are nutrients found in food and beverages that provide the body with calories. Carbohydrates affect blood glucose the most, making them an important factor in the management of diabetes. All carbohydrates are broken down in the body to single sugars (glucose, fructose and galactose). Sugars and fiber are classes of carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are found in dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables. They are also present in greater amounts in starchy vegetables like beans, corn, peas, potatoes and squash. Sweeteners have carbohydrates, too. These should be eaten occasionally and in small amounts within carbohydrate and calorie goals.

**Portion Control**

Portions for discretionary calories

It's a common myth that people with diabetes have to avoid sugar entirely. Sweeteners in moderation and nutritious foods with added sugars can be part of a healthy diet, as long as the total carbohydrates fit within their daily goals.<sup>1</sup>

No measuring cups in sight? Use these everyday items instead:

- Lightbulb = 1/2 cup
- Ice cream cone = 1 oz
- Dark chocolate = 1 oz
- 1 tsp = 1 tsp
- 1 tsp = 1 tsp
- 1 tsp = 1 tsp

**Portion control tips**  
Keep portions in check with these tips and tricks:

- Use smaller plates and bowls for meals and snacks.
- Take portioned servings in measuring cups to know exactly how much you're eating.
- Keep food off the counter and in your serving dish to prevent eating out of sight and out of mind.

**1. American Diabetes Association. Know your facts about diabetes. Available at: <https://diabetes.org/know-your-facts-about-diabetes>. Accessed March 1, 2024.**

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**Carbohydrates and Sports Nutrition**

**Sugar Is a Carbohydrate**

Sugar is a simple carbohydrate. All carbohydrates are made up of one or more molecules of sugar. No matter how complex a carbohydrate is, it is broken down in the body into simple sugars (glucose, fructose and galactose) before it can be used for energy.

**Timing Is Everything**

Knowing how sugar is broken down and used in the body can help you time your sugar intake to support your performance. When consumed before exercise, simple carbohydrates offer fast energy for working muscles. During exercise, simple carbohydrates help maintain blood glucose. After exercise, simple carbohydrates help replenish glycogen stores and aid in recovery.

**Sugar Is a Partner in Fueling Nutrient Delivery**

**GRANOLA BARS**  
A little sugar increases the shelf-life of granola bars and helps them stay moist. Sugar also helps bind the ingredients together and adds a pleasant taste.

**CHOCOLATE MILK**  
The sugar in low-fat chocolate milk helps enhance the sweetness of the cocoa, making the post-workout drink with the perfect combination of carbohydrates and protein for recovery.

**PROTEIN SHAKE**  
In addition to providing carbohydrates, protein shakes can help replenish glycogen stores and aid in recovery.

**TRAIL MIX**  
A little sugar in trail mix helps enhance the sweetness of the cocoa, making the post-workout drink with the perfect combination of carbohydrates and protein for recovery.

**PEANUT BUTTER**  
A little sugar increases the shelf-life of peanut butter and helps it stay moist. Sugar also helps bind the ingredients together and adds a pleasant taste.

**STRAWBERRY YOGURT**  
A little sugar can help the acidity and tartness of natural strawberries and enhance the sweetness of low-fat yogurt.

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**SWEETENERS** you might find in your food

There are many different sweeteners in our food supply today that might be used as a substitute to table sugar. Here are some common sweeteners and their relative sweetness compared to table sugar.

Sweetener	Relative Sweetness	Caloric Sweeteners	Non-Caloric Sweeteners
Sugar	1.0	Yes	No
Agave	1.0	Yes	No
Brown Rice Syrup	1.0	Yes	No
Cane Sugar	1.0	Yes	No
Date Syrup	1.0	Yes	No
Fructose	1.0	Yes	No
High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)	1.0	Yes	No
Honey	1.0	Yes	No
Maple Syrup	1.0	Yes	No
Stevia	200-300	No	Yes
Sucralose	600	No	Yes
Sorbitol	0.6	Yes	No
Xylitol	0.9	Yes	No

**SWEETENERS COMPARED TO SUGAR**

**Caloric Sweeteners**

- Sugar**: A natural sweetener found in many fruits and vegetables. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Agave**: A natural sweetener made from the agave plant. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into fructose and glucose.
- Brown Rice Syrup**: A natural sweetener made from brown rice. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Cane Sugar**: A natural sweetener made from sugarcane. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Date Syrup**: A natural sweetener made from dates. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Fructose**: A natural sweetener found in many fruits. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)**: A natural sweetener made from corn. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Honey**: A natural sweetener made from bees. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.
- Maple Syrup**: A natural sweetener made from maple trees. It is a simple carbohydrate that is broken down into glucose and fructose.

**Non-Caloric Sweeteners**

- Stevia**: A natural sweetener made from the stevia plant. It is a non-caloric sweetener that is broken down into steviol glycosides.
- Sucralose**: A synthetic sweetener made from sucrose. It is a non-caloric sweetener that is broken down into sucralose.
- Sorbitol**: A natural sweetener found in many fruits. It is a non-caloric sweetener that is broken down into sorbitol.
- Xylitol**: A natural sweetener found in many fruits. It is a non-caloric sweetener that is broken down into xylitol.

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#RealSugar

the Sugar association

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