

Total and Added Sugars

Diets high in calories from added sugars can make it difficult to meet daily recommended levels of important nutrients while staying within calorie limits.

What They Are

Sugars are the **smallest** and simplest type of **carbohydrate**. They are easily digested and absorbed by the body. Total Sugars on the Nutrition Facts label include:

- **Sugars naturally present** in many nutritious foods and beverages, such as sugar in milk and fruit.
- **Added sugars**, which include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices.

Where They Are Found

Sugars are found in a variety of foods, including:

Sugars naturally present in food

- Dairy products (such as milk and yogurt)
- Fruit (fresh, frozen, dried, and canned in 100% fruit juice)
- 100% fruit and vegetable juice
- Vegetables

Added sugars

- Baked goods (such as cakes, cookies, pastries, and pies)
- Desserts (such as ice cream and puddings)
- Salad dressings, sauces, spreads, condiments, and gravies
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (such as energy drinks, fruit drinks, soft drinks, sports drinks, and sweetened coffee and tea)
- Sweets (such as candies, jams, sweet toppings, and syrups)
- Single-ingredient sugars (such as table sugar, maple syrup, or honey)

What They Do

- All sugars provide calories, or “energy,” for the body. Each gram of sugar provides **4 calories**. The human body breaks down sugars and other carbohydrates into glucose. Glucose in the blood (often referred to as blood sugar) is the primary energy source for the body’s cells, tissues, and organs (such as the brain and muscles). Glucose can be used immediately or stored in the liver and muscles for later use.
- Sugars are also used to sweeten, preserve, and improve the functional attributes of foods and beverages (such as viscosity, texture, body, color, and browning capability).

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Added sugars are a nutrient to get less of.



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Health Facts

- Most Americans exceed the recommended limits for added sugars in the diet. On average, Americans consume more than 13% of total calories (or almost 270 calories) per day from added sugars, with intakes particularly high among children, adolescents, and young adults. The main sources of added sugars are sugar-sweetened beverages, baked goods, desserts, and sweets.
- There is evidence that diets characterized, in part, by lower consumption of sugar-sweetened foods and beverages relative to less healthy dietary patterns are associated with a **reduced risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the United States. Diets higher in all sugars can also **increase the risk of developing cavities**.
- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend limiting calories from added sugars to less than 10% of total calories per day (e.g., 200 calories or 50 grams per day of added sugars based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet). The guidelines also note that when sugars are added to foods and beverages, it increases calories without contributing important nutrients. These extra calories can make it harder for people to meet their daily recommended levels of nutrients and stay within calorie limits.

✓ Action Steps

For Reducing Added Sugars in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts** label as a tool for reducing consumption of added sugars. The Nutrition Facts label on food and beverage packages shows the amount in grams (g) of total sugars per serving of the food and the amount in grams (g) and the % Daily Value (%DV) of added sugars per serving of the food.

Labels on packages and containers of single-ingredient sugars (such as table sugar, maple syrup, or honey) will list the %DV for added sugars within the Nutrition Facts label and the gram amount per serving may be included in a footnote.

The Daily Value for added sugars is less than 50 g per day. This is based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet—your Daily Value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

- Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of added sugars each day. And remember:
 - 5% DV or less of added sugars per serving is considered low
 - 20% DV or more of added sugars per serving is considered high
- Choose whole fruit (fresh, frozen, dried, and canned in 100% fruit juice) as snacks and desserts and add fruit to salads and side dishes.
- Try unsweetened or no-sugar added versions of fruit sauces (such as applesauce) and plain, fat-free or 1% low-fat yogurt.
- Instead of sugars, syrups, or other sweet toppings, use fruit to top foods like cereal, oatmeal, pancakes, and yogurt.
- More often, choose beverages such as water and fat-free or 1% low-fat milk. Less often, choose beverages that are high in calories but have few or no beneficial nutrients, such as energy drinks, fruit drinks, soft drinks, and sports drinks.
- Limit the amount of sugar you add to foods when cooking, baking, and eating.
- Consume smaller portions of foods and beverages that are higher in added sugars or consume them less often.
- When eating out, request that sugars, syrups, or other sweet toppings be served “on the side,” then use less of them. You can also ask if nutrition information is available to help you make informed choices.