

# Cut Down on Added Sugars

**Learn how to limit calories from added sugars—and still enjoy the foods and drinks that you love. Choosing a healthy eating pattern low in added sugars can have important health benefits.**

The *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends limiting calories from added sugars to no more than 10% each day. That's 200 calories, or about 12 teaspoons, for a 2,000 calorie diet.

## What Are Added Sugars?

Just like it sounds, added sugars aren't in foods naturally—they're added. They include:

- Sugars and syrups that food manufacturers add to products like sodas, yogurt, candies, cereals, and cookies
- Sugar you add yourself—like the teaspoon of sugar in your coffee

Some foods have sugar naturally—like fruits, vegetables, and milk. The sugars in these foods are not added sugars.

The average American gets 270 calories of added sugars each day. **That's about 17 teaspoons of sugar!**



## What's the Problem with Added Sugars?

Eating and drinking too many foods and beverages with added sugars makes it difficult to achieve a healthy eating pattern without taking in too many calories. **Added sugars contribute calories, but no essential nutrients.**

Almost half of the added sugars in our diets come from drinks—like sodas, fruit drinks, and other sweetened beverages.

## What Foods Have Added Sugars?

Lots of them. Some include:

- Regular sodas, energy drinks, and sports drinks
- Candy
- Fruit drinks, such as fruitades and fruit punch
- Cakes, cookies, and brownies
- Pies and cobblers
- Sweet rolls, pastries, and doughnuts
- Dairy desserts, such as ice cream

## How Can I Cut Down on Added Sugars?

You don't have to give up the foods you love completely. Instead, you can limit added sugars by making some smart, small changes to how you eat. Here are 3 things you can do:

### 1. Find Out How Many Calories You're Getting from Added Sugars Now.

You can use the USDA's [Supertracker.usda.gov/](https://supertracker.usda.gov/) to get an idea. Once you know, you can make changes.

## 2. Make Some Healthy Shifts.

Replace foods and drinks high in added sugars with healthier options. You could:

- Eat fruit for dessert instead of cookies or cakes
- Swap sugary cereals for unsweetened cereal with fruit
- Drink water or low-fat milk with meals instead of sodas

You can still have foods and drinks with added sugars—just choose smaller portions or have them less often.

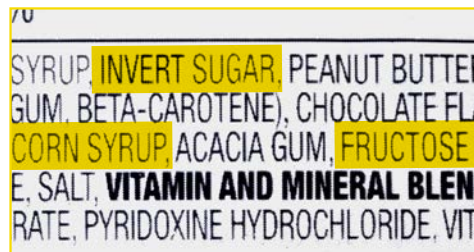
- If you choose to have a soda, select a smaller size
- Add 1 teaspoon of sugar to your tea or coffee instead of 2

## 3. Check the Ingredients.

Look for added sugars in the ingredients list. The higher up added sugars are on the list, the more added sugar is in the product.

Added sugars go by a lot of different names like: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, trehalose, and turbinado sugar.

Added sugars hide in foods that you might not expect. They're common in foods like pasta sauces, crackers, pizzas, and more.



### Added Sugars Add Up:



1 Tablespoon of Tomato Ketchup =  
**12 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Bottle of Sports Drink  
(20 Ounces) =  
**122 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Cup of Flavored Cereal =  
**48 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Can of Regular Soda  
(12 Fluid Ounces) =  
**126 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Serving of Flavored Yogurt  
(6 Ounces) =  
**72 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Piece of Chocolate Cake =  
**196 Calories** of Added Sugars



1 Chocolate Bar (1.6 Ounces) =  
**74 Calories** of Added Sugars

### What About Artificial Sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners—like saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), and sucralose—can help you cut down on calories. But they may not be a good way to manage your weight in the long run.

Want to learn more about added sugars and how to find a healthy eating pattern that works for your family? Check out [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov), which has more information from the *Dietary Guidelines*, online tools, recipes, and more.