

Fast facts for busy bodies

 by accredited nutritionist
Catherine Saxelby

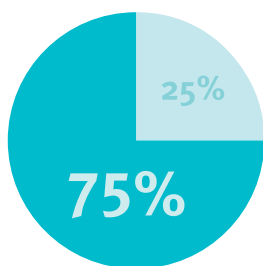
SUGAR – ARE YOU SWEET ENOUGH?

On its own, a little sugar is not bad for you – but you do need to consider how much and how often you eat it. In moderation, sugar is unlikely to cause harm and make low fat, high fibre foods taste better. A spread of jam on multigrain toast or a handful of sweets is hardly going to destroy the nutritional value of a whole diet.

But sugar is a refined food, supplying no vitamins, minerals or fibre. The only nourishment that sugar has to offer is kilojoules (calories). Because it's easy to overconsume, too much sugar can lead to overweight which then sets the scene for health problems such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer. And it does play a role in tooth decay.

SUGAR IS HIDDEN

Only about 25% of the total sugar we ingest is sugar that we consciously add to foods, for example in tea, coffee or in home baking. The remaining 75% comes from the everyday packaged foods and drinks we consume such as soft drink, juices, cereals, biscuits and sweets.



25% we add
75% from packaged foods (soft drink, juice, confectionery, ice creams, cakes)

HOW MUCH SUGAR?

Soft drink
375ml
10 tsp sugar

Coke Buddy
600ml
16 tsp

Orange juice
250ml
5 tsp

Flavoured milk
300ml
6 tsp

Sports Drink
600ml
5 tsp



WHERE'S THE SUGAR?

FOOD	SUGAR IN GRAMS	SUGAR IN TEASPOONS
Drinks		
Soft drink, 1 can	40.9	10
Fruit juice drink, orange, 1 glass	28.8*	7
Flavoured milk, 300ml carton	28.2	6
Cordial (made up), 1 glass	22.5	5½
Orange juice 100%, 1 glass	18.5*	4½
Sports drink, 600ml	20	5
Cakes & biscuits		
Danish pastry, 1	16.1	4
Tim Tam, 2 biscuits	15.6	3½
Muffin, 1	13.3	3
Doughnut, 1	6.6	1½
Milk Arrowroot, 2 biscuits	3.6	½
Cereals		
Fruit Loops, 1 bowl	11.7	3
Muesli, 1 bowl	12.9*	3
Sultana Bran, 1 bowl	10.2*	2½
Corn Flakes, 1 bowl	2.6	½
Confectionery		
Mars Bar, 1 bar	34.8	8½
Milk chocolate, 6 squares	16.7	4
Hard-boiled sweets, 3	8.8	2
Muesli bar, fruit, 1 bar	6.9*	1½
Liquorice, 1 strip	4.8	1
Ice-creams & desserts		
Yoghurt, fruit, 200g tub	25.6*	6
Paddle Pop, 1	22.1	5½
Ice-cream, 1 scoop	9.9	2½

*Also includes natural sugars from fruit. Tip: To work out the number of teaspoons of sugar in a product, divide the grams of sugar by 4 (there are 4 grams of sugar in each standard level teaspoon of sugar).

HOW MUCH SUGAR SHOULD YOU EAT?

This depends on how many kilojoules (calories) you require and how active you are. Around 10 to 12% of your kilojoules can come from sugar without any problems.

So a sedentary woman who eats 7,500 kilojoules (1,800 cal) a day would be able to consume 45g of sugar. This translates to 11 level teaspoons of sugar a day – not much when you realise that one 60g chocolate bar has 35g of sugar. Most of us have to halve what we eat now.

The more active you are, the more sugar you can eat. A 16 year old active boy who burns off 12,600 kilojoules (3,000 cal) a day could tuck into some 20 teaspoons of sugar a day.

7,500kJ (1,800 cal)
45g



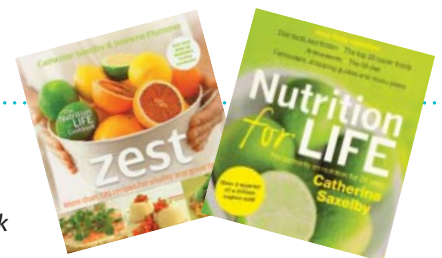
12,600kJ (3,000 cal)
75g



Tip: On a label, “sugars” means the total of what’s natural (say from fruit or milk) PLUS what’s added. You can’t tell how much is added sugar. Look at the ingredient list and see if some form of sugar is near the top of the list. Sugar can appear as glucose, dextrose, fructose, sucrose, maltose or fruit juice concentrate.



Produced by nutritionist **Catherine Saxelby** to help busy people eat better and look after their health. You can find more handy tips, articles and quick recipes at Catherine’s website www.foodwatch.com.au Catherine Saxelby is an award-winning food writer and author of *Nutrition for Life* and *Zest Cookbook* (Hardie Grant Books).



SUGAR ON LABELS – WHAT TO AIM FOR

Juices

Look for “No added sugar” types at 8 – 9% (this is 8g per 100g in the “Per 100g” column) but compare brands – some regular juices have less sugar than “No added sugar” types depending on their natural sweetness.

Cereals

Look for 15% or less sugars OR
Look for 25% or less sugars for cereals with dried fruit (Sultana Bran, Just Right) as these have natural sugars as well as added. Compare brands and buy the lowest sugar percentage you see.

Fruit yoghurt

Look for 15% or less sugars (natural unflavoured yoghurt has around 8% sugars to start with).

4 WAYS TO CUT BACK ON SUGAR

- 1 Watch what you drink from soft drink, energy drinks, sports drinks, cordial and juice. Opt for water to quench your thirst instead.
- 2 Cut back on sweet ‘junk food’ like lollies, fruit straps, chocolate, cakes and fancy ice creams. Save these treats for special occasions and make them small.
- 3 Between meals, snack on fresh fruit or nuts or yoghurt or cheese and crackers instead of sweet biscuits, chocolate or muffins. Sweeten your cereal with banana, chopped fresh fruit or a handful of sultanas.
- 4 Don’t stress about the sugar from fruit yoghurt, flavoured milk, canned fruit, sugar on porridge or jam on toast – they’re the smallest contributors and make healthy food taste good. Jam is high in sugar (65%) but you only spread 2 teaspoons on your toast, so you consume a small 6g of sugar. Soft drink has 10% sugar but you drink a lot of it. A 370ml can stacks on 40g of sugar.