

healthy ways to sweeten your diet

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate that comes in many different forms. Common sources of sugar include added sugars such as table sugar, honey, molasses, corn syrup or corn sweeteners (sucrose), and natural sugars found in fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose).

Sugars and foods containing large amounts of added sugars have calories but little nutrition. These foods often contain large amounts of fat, which should also be eaten in moderation. Eating sugar does not cause diabetes, but eating too much can lead to unhealthy weight gain. Sugars or any carbohydrate that sticks to the teeth can also lead to tooth decay.

reading food labels

Sugars listed under the food label's Nutrition Facts are the sugars that occur naturally in the food (e.g. fructose, lactose), along with those that are added during processing (see box).

Naturally occurring sugars in whole foods do not cause the rapid rise in blood sugar that added sugars do. You can determine if a food is high in added sugar by looking at the ingredient list. Items in the ingredient list are in descending order. Therefore, if one of the first three ingredients is a type of added sugar, the food or beverage is probably high in unhealthy sugar and should be eaten in moderation.

tip: When cooking with sugar, try reducing the amount called for in the recipe by one-third to one-half. This will lower the carbohydrate and calorie amount without affecting the taste. Alternatively, try substituting all or part of the sugar with a sugar substitute appropriate for baking, e.g. sucralose (name brand Splenda®).

common added sugars:

Brown sugar	Corn sweetener
Corn syrup	Dextrose
Fructose	Glucose
Honey	Invert Sugar
Lactose	Malt syrup
Maltose	Molasses
Raw sugar	Sucrose
Syrup	Table Sugar
Fruit juice concentrate	
High fructose corn syrup	
(#1 sweetener used in United States)	

Major Sources of Added Sugars:

Sugar sweetened beverages (soda, juice drinks, fruitades, sweet tea, sports drinks)
Cakes, cookies, pies
Sweetened dairy (flavored milk, ice cream, flavored yogurt)
Candy

sugar alcohols

Sugar alcohols are also used to sweeten foods. Foods sweetened solely with sugar alcohols are marketed as “sugar free” because sugar alcohols are not considered sugars. If a food contains “sugar alcohols” the total gram amount will be listed after “sugar” on the food label. Most sugar alcohols contain about half the calories of typical carbohydrates and therefore cause blood sugar levels to rise less. For this reason, half of the sugar alcohol grams can be subtracted from the Total Carbohydrate.

Example:

Serving Size: 2 cookies

Total Carbohydrate: 15 grams

Sugar Alcohol: 12 grams*

**Total Carbohydrate - Half the Sugar Alcohol grams = Carbohydrate grams counted in meal plan.*

For this example: 15 - 6 grams of Sugar Alcohols = 9 grams counted in meal plan.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 cookies	
Servings Per Container about 3.5	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 220mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	2%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugar Alcohol 12g	
Protein 1g	

The food manufacturer may advertise this food as having only 6 “net carbs” because they typically subtract *all* of the sugar alcohol grams. If you are counting your carbohydrate grams, always double-check the math. Remember, you can only subtract *half* of the sugar alcohol grams.

Tip: Sugar alcohols may cause discomfort (e.g. bloating, diarrhea), especially in children. Therefore, foods containing sugar alcohols should be eaten in moderation.

The following list shows a 15 gram carbohydrate portion for several desserts that contain a moderate amount of sugar. Remember many of these also contain fat that adds additional calories. Therefore, these foods should be eaten in moderation.

food	serving size	exchanges/serving
Angel food cake, unfrosted	1/16th cake	1 carbohydrate
Brownie, small, unfrosted	2 inch square	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
Cake, unfrosted	2 inch square	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
Cookie, fat-free	2 small	1 carbohydrate
Cookie, sandwich style with creme filling	2 small	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
Gingersnaps	3	1 carbohydrate
Granola bar	1 bar	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
Ice cream	½ cup	1 carbohydrate, 2 fats
Ice cream, light	½ cup	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
Ice cream, fat-free, no sugar added	½ cup	1 carbohydrate
Yogurt, frozen, low-fat, fat-free	1/3 cup	1 carbohydrate, 0 - 1 fat
Yogurt, frozen, fat-free, no sugar added	½ cup	1 carbohydrate
Vanilla wafers	5	1 carbohydrate, 1 fat
1 carbohydrate exchange/serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate		

if you have diabetes...

The key to managing diabetes is to balance your total carbohydrate intake with your insulin (what your body makes or what you take) and exercise.

Carbohydrates include:

- Starches: bread, cereal, rice, pasta, legumes (beans, peas, lentils) and starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, and green peas)
- Natural sugars found in fruit and milk
- Refined sugars added to foods during processing

Foods that contain added sugars, such as cookies and cake, can be enjoyed in moderation by substituting them, or exchanging them for other carbohydrate foods in the diet. It is not healthy to regularly give up foods from the starch, fruit and milk group for desserts. Your dietitian can help you decide what is right for you.

Tip: Carefully read labels on “sugar-free foods.” Some of these foods, such as desserts and candies, have the same amount of total carbohydrate and calories as the original product. *Remember, it’s the “Total Carbohydrates” that you count towards your meal plan.*

difference between carbohydrate (carb) choices of foods with sugar versus comparable sugar-free foods

instead of...			try...				
	Carb servings	Cal	Carb gm/ serving		Carb servings	Cal	Carb gm/ serving
Sweeteners				Sweeteners			
Sugar (1 Tbsp)	1	50	13	Sugar substitute (saccharine, aspartame, or sucralose) such as Sweet 'n Low® Equal®, or Splenda®	free	0	
Honey (1 Tbsp)	1	60	17				
Molasses (1 Tbsp)	1	50	14				
Regular pancake syrup (2 Tbsp)	2	100	30	Artificially sweetened dietetic syrup (less than 20 cal/2 Tbsp)	free	0	
Light pancake syrup (2 Tbsp)	1	50	12				
Regular or fruit spread jam, jelly, preserves, marmalade (1 Tbsp)	1	50	13	Dietetic/Low sugar jam, jelly, preserves, marmalade (1 Tbsp)	free	0	
Sweetened Drinks				Sweetened Drinks			
Regular soft drink (12 oz)	2.5	150	39	Diet soft drink (12 oz)	free	0	
Sweetened drink mix (8 oz) such as lemonade, tea	2	110	29	Sugar-free tea, lemonade (8 oz)	free	0	

Note: A “free” carb choice has 20 calories or less per serving and 0-5 grams of carbohydrate per serving.

difference between carbohydrate (carb) choices of foods with sugar versus comparable sugar-free foods

instead of...

try...

	Carb servings	Cal	Carb gm/ serving		Carb servings	Cal	Carb gm/ serving
Dairy Products				Dairy Products			
Chocolate milk mix (1 Tbsp) + 1 c 1% fat milk	2	160	26	Sugar-free chocolate milk mix (1 tsp) + 1 c 1% fat milk	1	100	12
Regular hot chocolate (1 pkt) + 6 fl oz water	1.5	100	23	Sugar-free hot chocolate (1 pkt) + 6 fl oz water	1	50	11
Regular pudding (½ c)	2	140	26	Sugar-free pudding (½ c)	1	70	15
Regular sweetened yogurt (8 oz)	3	250	42	Light yogurt sweetened with Nutra-Sweet® (8 oz)	1	100	16
Instant breakfast mix + 1 c 1% fat milk	2.5	250	39	Sugar-free instant breakfast mix (1 pkt) with 1 c 1% fat milk	1	70	15
Cereals				Cereals			
Sugar-sweetened cereal (¾ c)	2	120	28	Unsweetened cereal (¾ c)	1	80	16
Fruit				Fruit			
Syrup packed canned fruit (½ c)	2	90	26	Juice-packed canned fruit (½ c)	1	60	15
Gelatin				Gelatin			
Regular flavored gelatin (½ c)	1	80	20	Sugar-free flavored gelatin (½ c)	free	0	



example of ways to substitute lower sugar foods for sugar sweetened foods*

sugar sweetened foods

lower sugar foods

	carb ¹ servings	cal	carb gm/ serving		carb ¹ servings	cal	carb gm/ serving-
breakfast				breakfast			
Regular fruit yogurt (8 oz)	3	250	42	Light yogurt sweetened w/ Nutra Sweet® (8 oz)	1	100	16
Frosted Flakes (1 c)	2.5	150	35	Corn Flakes (1 c)	2	100	26
Toast (1)	1	70	13	Toast (1)	1	70	13
Jelly, regular (1 Tbsp)	1	50	13	Jelly, low sugar (1 Tbsp)	½	25	6
Milk, 2 % (½ c)	0.5	60	6	Milk, 2 % (½ c)	½	60	6
Coffee w/ 1 Tbsp sugar	1	50	13	Coffee w/ artificial sweetener		free	
Meal Total	9	630	122	Meal Total	5	355	67
snack				snack			
Coffee w/ 1 Tbsp sugar	1	50	13	Coffee w/ artificial sweetener		free	
lunch				lunch			
Ham, lean		140		Ham, lean		140	
Mayonnaise, fat-free (1 Tbsp)			10	Mayonnaise, fat-free (1 Tbsp)			10
Bread (2 slices)	2	160	26	Bread (2 slices)	2	160	26
Fruit, syrup packed (½ c)	2	90	26	Fruit, juice packed (½ c)	1	60	15
Ice cream, vanilla (½ c)	1	130	17	Sugar-free popsicle (1.75 fl oz)		free	
Cola (12 oz)	3	150	39	Diet Cola (12 oz)		free	
Meal Total	8	680	108	Meal Total	3	370	41
snack				snack			
Regular flavored gelatin (½ c)	1	70	17	Flavored gelatin (½ c)	0	10	1
dinner				dinner			
Regular flavored gelatin (½ c)	1	80	19	Sugar-free flavored gelatin (½ c)		free	
Chicken Breast (3 oz)		165		Chicken Breast (3 oz)		165	
Potato, baked (1 medium)	2.5	160	37	Potato, baked (1 medium)	2.5	160	37
Broccoli (½ c)		free	25	Broccoli (½ c)		free	25
Roll (1)	1	80	14	Roll (1)	1	80	14
Diet margarine (2 Tbsp)		90		Diet margarine (2 Tbsp)		90	
Sugar sweetened lemonade (12 oz)	2	110	29	Sugar-free lemonade (12 oz)		free	
Meal Total	6.5	710	99	Meal Total	3	520	51
total choices	25.5	2140	359	total choices	10.5	1245	160

* This one day example demonstrates how selecting lower sugar foods will save approximately 1000 calories (18 carb choices), which could result in a 2 pound per week weight loss.

¹Carbohydrate servings: 0-5 carbohydrate grams = 0 servings, 6-10 grams = 0.5 servings, 11-20 grams = 1 serving, 21-25 grams = 1.5 servings, 26-35 grams = 2 servings, 36-40 grams = 2.5 servings, 41-50 grams = 3 servings

