

Added Sugar- Topic of the Month

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Sugar is a part of our daily diet. Whether naturally occurring or added, many experts believe we consume too much added sugar, and it is putting our health at risk. A diet high in added sugar is associated with high weight gain, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and tooth decay.

What is added sugar?

Added sugars are sugars added to foods during preparation, processing, or at the table. They may include white table sugar or brown sugar (sucrose), syrup (fructose), honey (dextrose), agave (fructose), molasses, or [high-intensity sweeteners](#) that are used to sweeten or enhance the flavor of foods. It does not include naturally occurring sugars such as fructose found in fruit or lactose found in milk.

The recommendations

The [Dietary Guidelines of Americans 2020-2025](#) has set recommendations for intake of added sugar that includes:

- Under age 2: no added sugar.
- Aged 2 and above: added sugar should be limited to 10% of total daily calories.

These recommendations are based on careful scientific review of current research in which review committees have concluded that there is a strong association between added sugars and increased disease risk for children and adults.

One of the [Healthy People 2030](#) objectives is to [Reduce consumption of added sugars by people aged 2 years and over — NWS-10](#).

WIC counselors and nutritionists have been recommending limiting sugar in a child's diet for years. Helping parents identify foods high in added sugar and helping them set achievable goals towards limiting these foods can have a positive impact on a child's overall nutritional health.

Finding hidden added sugars

Main sources of added sugars are found in the drinks we consume on a regular basis such as sodas, fruit-flavored drinks, sport beverages, energy drinks, coffee, tea drinks, and flavored milk. We can't forget though about the sugars that hide in the foods we eat! Foods like sweetened breakfast cereals and bars and sweet treats like ice cream, cake, cookies, brownies, donuts, and candy are most tempting.

The best way to identify the amount of added sugars in foods is by reading the food 'Nutrition Facts' label. This can give you a better idea of how much sugar is in many prepackaged foods and may help to alert you to added sugars that are hidden in products that do not have a label.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 8 fl oz (240mL)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	110
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 25g	
Includes 23g Added Sugars	46%
Protein 0g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 0mg	0%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 40mg	0%
<small>* 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.</small>	

Image source: [Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts Label](#) (U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA))

Understanding the *Nutrition Facts* label will make it easier for parents to distinguish between *naturally occurring* sugar (such as lactose in dairy products) and *sugars added* to products.

- The food labels distinguish total (naturally occurring) sugars (1) from added sugars (2).
- Added sugars will be listed as grams per serving.
- The % Daily Value (DV) on the chart indicates how much a nutrient in the product contributes to the daily diet.

Tips for families

We can offer our WIC families tips to reduce their added sugar intake individually and as a family. When families make changes together, they are more likely to stick and lead to healthier habits over the course of a lifetime.

Tips:

- Offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables with meals or snacks (no added sugars).
- Offer unflavored low-fat milk or soy-beverage.
- Offer water freely throughout the day.

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- Offer no more than 4 oz of 100% juice per day.
- Focus on nutrient-dense foods, limiting sugar, saturated fats, and sodium.
- Limit snacks high in added sugars such as cookies, cakes, donuts, or ice cream.
- Offer snacks low in added sugar like fruits and vegetables, WIC cereals, or nut butter on whole grain bread.
- Read packaged food labels to identify hidden sugars in foods.
- Encourage families to check the WIC [Shopping Guide](#) for foods with no added sugar.

Putting it into practice:

Scenario:

Joseph, parent of Jenny, a 3-year-old child, is at the WIC clinic today for a recertification appointment. Sara, WIC CPA completing the appointment, hasn't identified a specific nutrition concern during the nutrition assessment and has noted that Jenny's growth is very consistent for her age. Sara wants to get insight from Joseph on Jenny's eating behaviors.

- **CPA:** "What questions or concerns do you have about Jenny's eating?"
- **Parent:** "I don't have any questions or concerns".
- **CPA:** "If there was one thing you'd like to change in your child's diet, what would it be?"
- **Parent:** "Everything is fine".

What now?

Where do you go from here? Is the appointment complete? How can we engage the parent to talk about the child's eating behaviors while keeping the appointment participant-centered and not feeling forced?

We can try to initiate conversation by sharing information about a common area of concern we see with other children. Before sharing information, we want to ask permission to show we are respectful of the parent's time and interest.

Engaging the parent:

- **CPA:** "I have had other parents ask me about the effects of too much sugar in their child's diet. I have the recommendations for children around Jenny's age. Is this something you would like to hear more about?"

Parent is open to the information:

- **Parent:** "Sure, that sounds interesting."
- **CPA:** "Great, can you share what Jenny is currently eating. What foods do you think she eats that have sugar added to them?"

If the parent is unsure of what foods are high in sugar, you might show a graph of where sugar is found in a typical diet or a list of high sugar foods to engage them in the conversation.

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Depending on the response or reaction, level of change talk you hear, participant's knowledge, or their concern about sugar in the child's diet, you might try the [Explore-Offer-Explore](#) technique.

- **Explore:** "What have you heard about added sugars in foods?"
- **Offer:** Ask permission and then offer additional information on things like sugar recommendations, limiting sweetened beverages, amount of sugar in various foods, how to read the food label, naturally sweet snack choices like fruit, etc., based on and tailored to the conversation. *Limit information to facts, not judgements.* Share only 1 or 2 things.
- **Explore:** Ask questions like "What are your thoughts on what I just shared?" or "What surprises you about this information?" or "Knowing what you know about what your child likes to eat and these new recommendations, what might you do with this information?"
- **Summarize** the conversation, reflecting any change talk that you have heard.

Parent not interested in moving forward:

- **Parent:** "No, I really don't have time today for that."
- **CPA:** "I can understand how busy life is with a young child. If you are open to it, I can send you home with our [Choose a Healthy Plate for Kids](#) education card. If you would like to talk more about that next time, please let us know."

You may also offer one of the options from the resources for families list below.

Resources for families

[Summer Sips](#) (Sesame Street)- A storybook for kids on creative ways to drink more water.

[Anytime & Sometime Foods](#) (Sesame Street)- An article that explains which foods provides benefits and which are made for fun. Tip: Not all food is the same!

[New Nutrition Facts Label Includes Added Sugars](#) (Federal Drug Administration (FDA))- A short video to learn about reading the nutrition label to identify hidden sugars in products.

[Cut Back on Added Sugars](#) (MyPlate, US Department of Agriculture)- A downloadable pdf that shares tips on cutting back on added sugars.

Article resources

[Get the Facts: Added Sugars](#) (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC))

[Be Smart About Sugar](#) (CDC)

[Dietary Guidelines of Americans 2020-2025](#) (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA))

[Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts Label](#) (FDA)

References- complete listing of hyperlinks:

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[High-intensity sweeteners](http://www.fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/high-intensity-sweeteners) (www.fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/high-intensity-sweeteners)

[Dietary Guidelines of Americans 2020-2025](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf)

(www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf)

[Healthy People 2030](http://health.gov/healthypeople) (health.gov/healthypeople)

[Reduce consumption of added sugars by people aged 2 years and over — NWS-10](http://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/reduce-consumption-added-sugars-people-aged-2-years-and-over-nws-10)

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[Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts Label](https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-nutrition-facts-label?ref=popsugar.com) (https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-nutrition-facts-label?ref=popsugar.com)

[Shopping Guide](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/vendor/fpchnng/shopguide.pdf) (www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/vendor/fpchnng/shopguide.pdf)

[Explore-Offer-Explore](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/pcs/skills/development.html#explore)

(www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/pcs/skills/development.html#explore)

[Choose a Healthy Plate for](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/nutrition/english/childplate.pdf)

[Kids](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/nutrition/english/childplate.pdf) (www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/nutrition/english/childplate.pdf)

[Summer Sips](http://sesameworkshop.org/resources/summer-sips/) (sesameworkshop.org/resources/summer-sips/)

[Anytime & Sometime Foods](http://sesameworkshop.org/resources/anytime-foods-sometime-foods/) (sesameworkshop.org/resources/anytime-foods-sometime-foods/)

[New Nutrition Facts Label Includes Added Sugars](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFaCY6SgoHo&list=PLey4Qe-UxcxaZlZKEArX33qrQvrHfixv4&index=7)

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFaCY6SgoHo&list=PLey4Qe-UxcxaZlZKEArX33qrQvrHfixv4&index=7)

[Cut Back on Added Sugars](http://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/cut-back-added-sugars) (www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/cut-back-added-sugars)

[Get the Facts: Added Sugars](https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/data-research/added-sugars.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/data-research/added-sugars.html)

[Be Smart About Sugar](http://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/be-sugar-smart/index.html) (www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/be-sugar-smart/index.html)

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