

FALL



# ASK THE DIETITIAN

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Q. What exactly are added sugars?

**A.** Added sugars are simple carbohydrates added to foods for sweetness. Ingredients such as syrups, honey, molasses, nectar, sucrose, fructose and dextrose are all considered added sugars. Typically, these are found in foods without much nutritional benefit such as soda, sports drinks, cakes, cookies, sweetened fruit drinks and candy.

## Q. What about sugar in fruit? Should I be concerned if my child eats a lot of fruit?

**A.** Fruit, milk and yogurt all contain natural sugars, which are also found in smaller amounts in vegetables and grains. Eating more of these foods is a good choice because they also contain many other high quality nutrients such as fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals that our bodies need to grow and thrive.

## Q. What do health experts say when it comes to sugar?

**A.** The 2015-20 Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans eat fewer foods and drink fewer beverages higher in added sugars and limit their added sugar intake to 10% of total daily calories.<sup>1</sup> The American Heart Association recommends children ages 2 to 18 consume no more than 100 calories or 6 teaspoons of added sugars daily and limit their intake of sugar-sweetened drinks to no more than 1 cup (8 ounces) each week.<sup>2</sup>

## Q. How can I tell if a food has added or natural sugar?

**A.** Current food labels only feature the grams of total sugars in a food, which includes both natural and added sugars so it's harder to tell in a product, such as flavored yogurt, the exact amounts of each. The good news is food labels are getting an update. By the end of 2018, food labels will list grams of total sugars as well as grams and percentage daily value of added sugars per serving.<sup>3</sup>

## Q. What are some reasonable ways to cut back on how much sugar my kids eat?

**A.** When buying condiments or tomato sauce, look for added sugars in the ingredients list. The higher they are on the list, the more added sugar is in that product. Choose cereals with less than 5 grams of sugar per serving. Try plain yogurt sweetened with fruit instead of flavored yogurt. Dilute sports or fruit drinks with water. Make baked goods at home more often. Serve dessert in smaller portions with more fruit.

<sup>1</sup> <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/executive-summary/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://newsroom.heart.org/news/children-should-eat-less-than-25-grams-of-added-sugars-daily>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm>