

## Sugar - Natural vs Added

by, Susan Locke, MD

Healthnetwork Medical Director

Did you know that the average American eats 60+ lbs. of added sugar per year? Seem like a lot? Let's talk about sugar in your diet.

There are two types of sugars – *naturally occurring* sugars and *added* sugars.

*Naturally occurring sugars* are in foods such as fruit (called fructose) and in milk (lactose).

*Added sugars* include *any* sugars which are added to food or drinks during the preparation or processing of the food. The major offenders are soft drinks, candy, cake, cookies, pies, ice cream, processed food and many types of store bought fruit juice. That's the bad news.

The good news is that sugar does not need to be completely eliminated from your diet. The American Heart Association's guidelines for *added* sugars include these recommendations:

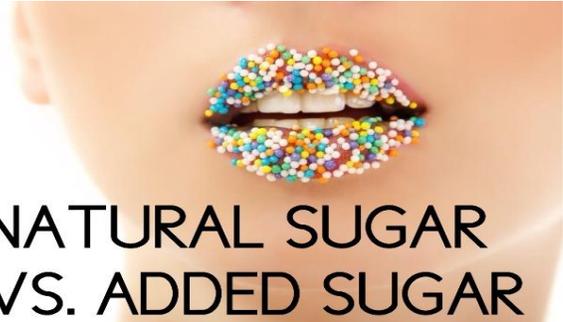
Men – 150 calories per day (37.5 gm or 9 teaspoons)

Women – 100 calories per day (25 gm or 6 teaspoons)

Children – Preschool age: 4 tsp. | Age 4-8 yrs.: 3 tsp. | Preteens and teens: 5-8 tsp.

So one would think that reading a food label to see how many grams of sugar are in the product should be a good way to keep track of how much sugar you are eating... Here's the problem – nutrition labels combine both the amount of naturally occurring sugar and added sugar to determine the sugar content for the label. So products that contain milk or unprocessed fruit will have some natural sugars in the measurement – you don't know how much is natural and how much is added.

In addition to the total grams of sugar listed on the nutrition label, it is important to read the ingredient label carefully to see if there are *added* sugars.



There can be many different names for added sugar in a product. Names of added sugars you might see include:

Corn syrup	Corn sweetener
Fruit juice concentrates	Honey
High fructose corn syrup	Brown sugar
Malt sugar	Raw sugar
Sugar	Syrup
Products ending in "ose" (glucose, dextrose fructose, lactose maltose, sucrose)	

Here are some hints to help you decipher the language of sugar content on food labels:

- Sugar free – contains < .5 gm of added sugars
- Reduced sugar – contains at least 25% fewer sugars per serving when compared to the standard product
- No added sugar | Without added sugar –no sugars or sugar containing ingredients have been added.

When you look at the label and see 12 gm. of total sugar, how do you determine how many calories there in a serving are from sugar? There are 4 calories per gram of sugar. Multiple the number of grams by 4 and you will get the number of calories of total sugar per serving. (12 g. x 4 = 48 cal). However, you still don't know exactly how many calories are coming from the added sugar. You just know the calories from the total sugar content. Even so, this can be valuable information when you are trying to limit the amount of sugar in your diet.

We should care about added sugar in our diet, because too much can contribute to obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Lots of things are toxic when consumed in large amounts, including water. This doesn't mean we need to stop drinking water ... or cut out sugar entirely.

Moderation is key.

Please visit *Prescription for a Better Life* by Susan Locke, M.D., at [www.healthnetworkfoundation.org](http://www.healthnetworkfoundation.org).

If you would like more information about Healthnetwork Foundation and how we can advocate for you, please call or email us today.