

Sugar- Sweet By Any Name

Sugar Consumption

As a nation, Americans consume more sugar than any other food additive- over 125 pounds per person each year! Unfortunately, this excess sugar consumption can lead to both tooth decay and obesity. Many of us believe that some sugars are better for us than others, but the fact is sugar- sucrose, glucose, fructose, lactose, dextrose and all the "oses" have little or no nutritive value. In fact, the only thing that sugar offers us is 4 "empty" calories per gram. To help decrease your intake of sugar, it helps to know the various names of sugar and read food labels carefully for hidden sources of sugar.



Common Sugars

Check food labels for these common types of "sugar". (When manufacturers list "sugar", they are referring to sucrose only.)

- **Sucrose** is common table sugar- refined, raw, turbinado, brown, molasses, and powdered.
- **Lactose** or "milk" sugar occurs naturally in milk products.
- **Total invert sugar** is a mixture of glucose and fructose sold only on liquid form.
- **Fructose** or levulose in its natural state is the "sugar" found in fresh fruit or honey; it is also made commercially from corn sugar.
- **Corn syrup** is produced by the action of enzymes or acids in cornstarch. (High fructose corn syrup is derived from corn.)
- **Glucose** or **dextrose** is also known as the "blood" sugar. All carbohydrates in the

body are broken down into glucose through the process of digestion.

- **Maltose** is manufactured from starch.
- **Sorbitol, manitol, malitol, and xylitol** are actually "sweet" alcohols or polyols. They occur naturally in fruit but are commercially produced from sources such as dextrose.

Artificial Sweeteners

Although artificial sweeteners can be useful- especially for diabetics- they should be used in moderation.

- **Saccharin** is a nonnutritive sweetener that is not recommended for children or pregnant women.
- **Aspartame**, a sugar substitute with no calories, has been widely tested and appears to be safe in moderation.

Hidden Sugars



Because of our love for sweets, food manufacturers often use added sugars to make commercial foods more appealing. Even "non-sweet" foods like ketchup, salad dressings, breads, and luncheon meats often contain added sugars. Before you place an item in your shopping cart, check the label for any of the above-mentioned sugars. Be sure to read the entire label since manufacturers are allowed to list various types of sugars separately. For instance, a popular snack cracker lists both sugar and high fructose corn syrup among its contents, while a butter-topped wheat bread contains sugar, honey, and corn syrup as added ingredients.



Remember that sugar comes in many names and forms. Be sure to check food labels for hidden sugars and limit your intake of sweets in general.

