

Let's lunch and learn!

August 2025

If you participate in the State Health Plan, you can find a nutritionist near you by logging into your Aetna account.

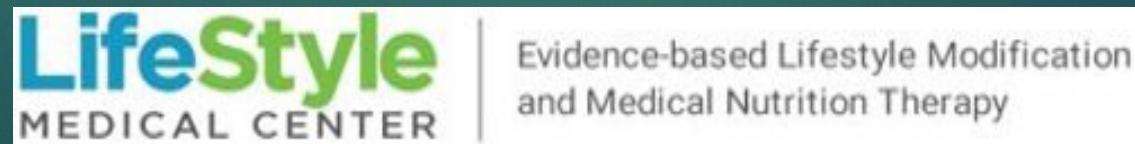
Dietician visits are covered at 100 percent when an in-network provider is used. Visit www.shpnc.org to learn more.

For future Worksite Wellness Lunch and Learn events or recordings of previous events, visit oshr.nc.gov/wellness-webinars.



Added Sugars and Sweeteners

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Evidence-based Lifestyle Modification
and Medical Nutrition Therapy

- ▶ Lifestyle Medical Centers offers Nutrition Counseling to assist with educating you on how to make positive lifestyle changes alongside continual support and encouragement.
- ▶ **Services offered:**
- ▶ Weight Management
- ▶ Women's Health
- ▶ Sports Nutrition
- ▶ Chronic Disease Counseling
- ▶ Bariatric Support
- ▶ Smoking Cessation
- ▶ Sleep Assessment and Stress Management



<https://lifestylemedicalcenters.com/>

Added Sugars:

Where does sugar
hide?



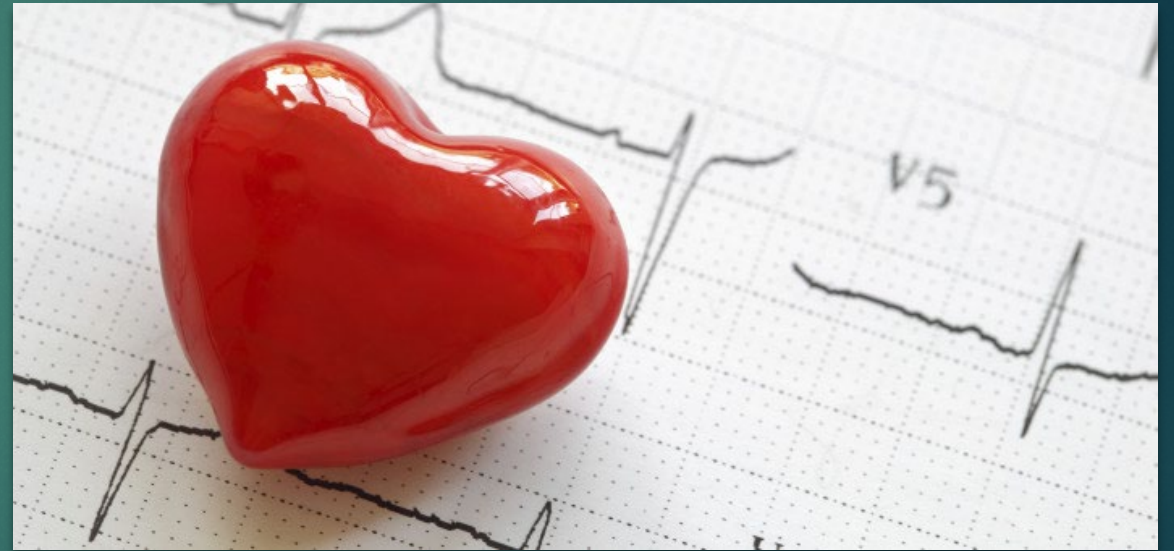
What are added sugars?

- ▶ Added sugars are those that are added to food and beverages during processing or preparation.
- ▶ Most common sources of added sugars are:
 - ▶ Sugary beverages
 - ▶ Candy
 - ▶ Desserts
 - ▶ Processed foods
 - ▶ Condiments, Honey, Syrups



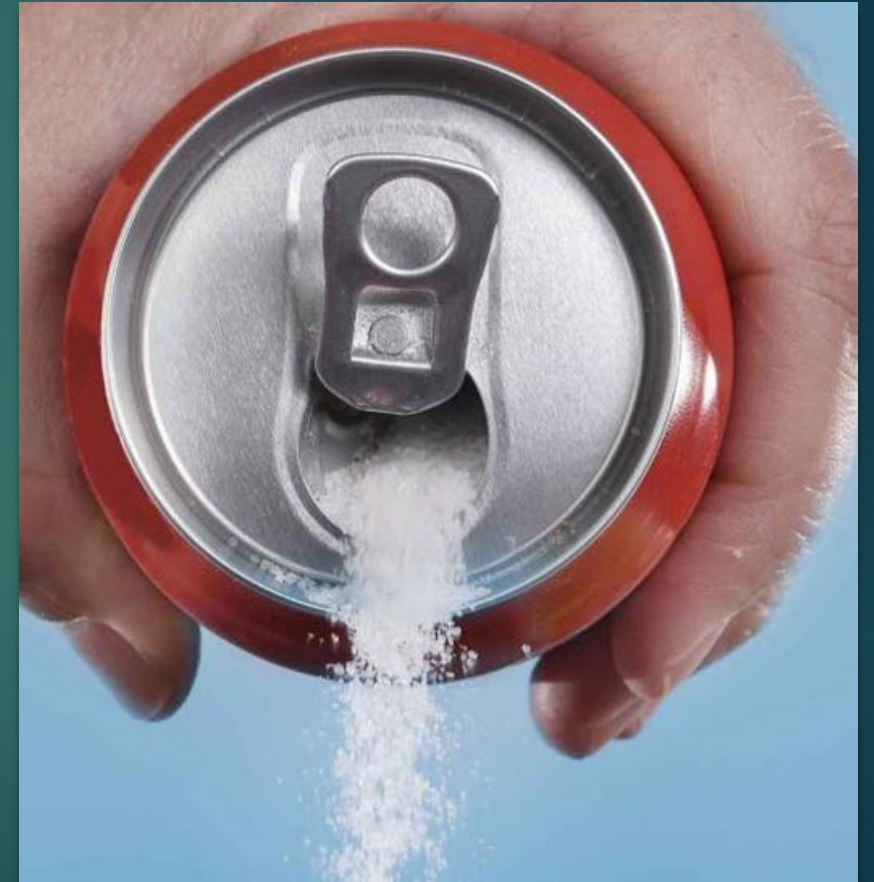
Health Risks of Too Much Added Sugar

- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Heart / Liver Disease
- ▶ Type 2 Diabetes / Kidney Disease
- ▶ Elevated Triglycerides / High Cholesterol
- ▶ Inflammation
- ▶ Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- ▶ High Blood Pressure
- ▶ Lack of Satiety (Fullness)
- ▶ Dementia / Cognitive Decline



Did you know?

- ▶ Compared to people that rarely consume sweetened soft drinks, people that consume one or more cans of soda per day have significantly increased health risks.
 - ▶ **26%** greater risk of developing **Type 2 diabetes**
 - ▶ **20%** higher risk of having a **heart attack** for men (**40%** higher risk when drinking **more than 2 cans** per day)
 - ▶ **75%** increased risk for developing **gout** in women (similar link for men)
 - ▶ **50%** greater risk of developing **metabolic syndrome**



How much added sugar is too much?

- ▶ The American Heart Association recommends the following:
 - ▶ For men: No more than 9 tsp (36g or 150 calories) per day
 - ▶ For women: No more than 6 tsp (25g or 100 calories) per day
- ▶ The World Health Association recommends the following:
 - ▶ Added sugars should make up less than 10% of your total daily energy intake. Ideally should be less than 5% for added health benefits.
 - ▶ Example: 1800 calories per day would = 90 – 180 calories per day coming from added sugars which would = 22-45g added sugar per day.



What about naturally occurring sugars?

- ▶ Many foods contain naturally-occurring sugars (fruit, dairy, grains, vegetables, nuts)
- ▶ Whole foods that naturally contain sugar are associated with **decreased risk** of chronic disease
- ▶ Foods with natural sugar will still impact blood sugar however they often have other vital nutrients as part of the picture: Fiber / Protein for example, that help stabilize blood sugars.



Understanding Food Labels:

- ▶ 1: Total Sugars
 - ▶ Also includes natural sugars (fruit, milk).
- ▶ 2: Added Sugars
 - ▶ All sugars added during processing and preparation.
- ▶ What about ingredients: What to look for?
 - ▶ Handout provided for reference “Sugar and Its Effects”.

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size 8 fl oz (240mL)

Amount per serving

Calories 110

% Daily Value*

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%

* 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.

1

2



Lower Sugar Products to Look For

Cereal: <10g Sugar

- ▶ Kashi Go Lean = 8g added sugar
- ▶ Cheerios = 1 g added sugar



Yogurt: $\leq 10\text{g}$ sugar

Siggis : Flavored yogurt = 7g added sugar

Chobani: Plain Yogurt = 0g added sugar



Pasta Sauce: $\leq 7g$ sugar

- ▶ Ragu Simply : 0g added sugar
- ▶ Rao's : 0g added sugar



Salad Dressing: \leq 2g Sugar

- ▶ Ken's Simply Greek: 0g added sugar
- ▶ Bolthouse Farms: 0g added sugar



Strategies for decreasing added sugar

- ▶ Cut out sugar-sweetened beverages
- ▶ Choose fruit or yogurt for dessert
- ▶ Read nutrition labels (look at ingredient list if nutrition label is not updated)
- ▶ Eat more whole foods/reduce processed foods



<https://mosswoodconnections.com/ambers-infused-water-recipes/>



Sweeteners

Types of Sweeteners

- 1.) Functional Sweeteners – mostly sugar alcohols, which occur naturally in fruits and vegetables.
- 2.) Artificial Sweeteners - synthetically produced and are many times sweeter than natural sugars.
- 3.) Natural Sweeteners - derived from natural sources such as plants, fruits, or other naturally occurring substances.



Functional Sweeteners: Sugar alcohols

- ▶ **Sugar alcohols** are low-digestible carbohydrates. Naturally found in fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Increased amounts can cause gas, diarrhea, and bloating.
- ▶ They have a reduced impact on blood sugar levels.
- ▶ Can still set off sweet receptors despite being a low-calorie sweetener.
- ▶ Examples: erythritol, isomalt, maltitol, sorbitol, xylitol



Artificial Sweeteners

- ▶ Aspartame
 - ▶ Diet sodas, sugar free gum, sugar-free desserts
- ▶ Sucralose
 - ▶ 600x sweeter than sucrose.
 - ▶ Soft drinks, baked goods, sweet snacks
- ▶ Saccharin
 - ▶ One of the first artificial sweeteners
 - ▶ Diet sodas, candies, processed foods



Natural Sweeteners And Naturally Derived Low-Calorie Sweeteners

- ▶ Natural Sweeteners

- ▶ Honey
- ▶ Maple Syrup
- ▶ Date Syrup
- ▶ Coconut Sugar



- ▶ Naturally-Derived Low-Calorie Sweeteners

- ▶ Monk Fruit Extract
- ▶ Stevia



Emerging Research Findings

- ▶ Artificial sweeteners **may alter gut microbiome** (may lead to insulin resistance, weight gain, altered bowel function).
- ▶ Artificial sweeteners **may increase appetite** and lead to increased caloric intake.
- ▶ Aspartame can **trigger headaches** in some adults.
- ▶ Mixed results on the impact on weight gain.
- ▶ Mixed results on the impact of the risk of Type 2 diabetes.



The Take Away!

- ▶ Unsweetened is best!
- ▶ Limit foods and beverages with added sugar. Choose mostly whole, minimally processed foods with any sweetness coming from fruits.
- ▶ Treat foods and beverages sweetened with non-nutritive sweeteners as treats not to be consumed frequently.
- ▶ When consuming sweetened foods or beverages, keep portions in check and eat slowly to savor the treat!



THANK YOU

References:

- ▶ <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-nutrition-facts-label>
- ▶ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/added-sugar-where-is-it-hiding>
- ▶ <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/292000/whats-the-difference-between-natural-and-added-sugars/>
- ▶ <https://www.news-medical.net/health/Sugar-Substitutes-Types-and-Uses.aspx#:~:text=Functional%20sweeteners%20include%20mainly%20polyols,in%20certain%20fruits%20and%20vegetables.>



Let's Cook!

Lemon
Blueberry Nice
Cream

From Eating
Well

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/7981785/lemon-blueberry-nice-cream/>