

# Nutrition Times

October 2024 Nutrition Services

## The Scoop on Sugar



Image by [Freenik](#)

Sugar is a carbohydrate, which our bodies use as a main source of energy. Sugars are found naturally in a variety of foods like fruits, dairy products, grains and some vegetables. We call those 'natural sugars.' These foods contain many other important nutrients that are important for our health. Sugar can also be added to some foods, like sweetened drinks, candy and baked goods. These are referred to as 'added sugars.' It is beneficial to limit the amount of added sugar we eat, but some can still be included in a balanced diet.

### How to spot sugar

You will find a list of ingredients on packaged foods. This can help identify if sugar is added to a food product. Natural sugars are not included in the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed by weight, so if you see sugar in the first few ingredients, that food is likely high in added sugar. Health Canada recently made food labelling changes, making it easier to identify sugar:

**Ingredients:** Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Flour • Vegetable oil shortening • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red  
**Contains:** Wheat • Egg

Source: [Health Canada](#)

### Reading food labels

We can use the Nutrition Facts table to see the total amount of sugars in a food product. However, it does not show the difference between added sugar and natural sugar. The Nutrition Facts table gives information about the total amount of sugar in that serving size:

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
<b>Calories 110</b>	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
	<b>% valeur quotidienne*</b>
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g</b>	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
<b>Sugars / Sucres 22 g</b>	<b>22 %</b>
<b>Protein / Protéines 2 g</b>	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg</b>	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	10 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

Source: [Health Canada](#)

We can also use the % Daily Value (%DV) to help determine if there is a lot or a little of certain nutrients in a packaged food. In this food product, we can see it provides 22% of the recommended daily amount of sugar. That would be classified as 'a lot'. The %DV can also be useful to compare similar products.

### Are some sugars better than others?

Other added sugars like agave, maple syrup, brown sugar or honey may seem like healthier options, but all added sugars are used very similarly by the body. Sugar substitutes like sucralose, aspartame or stevia do not contain calories or raise blood sugar like sugars do.

## Can I include some sugar in my diet?

- Of course! Canada's Food Guide does recommend limiting food and drinks with added sugar, but all foods can fit into a healthy diet.
- Avoid classifying foods as "good" or "bad". A higher sugar food is not a "bad" food, it is simply a food that we may enjoy from time to time.
- Sometimes, if we over-restrict a food, we end up craving it more and eating larger amounts. Instead, try giving yourself permission to include your higher sugar favorites at times, and listen to your body as you enjoy them mindfully.
- Try to focus on eating regular, [balanced meals](#) to help keep you energized and satisfied throughout the day.



Image by [Freepik](#)

### To learn more, check out these additional resources:

- [Label Reading the Healthy Way](#)
- [Explore Your Relationship with Food](#)
- [Sugar and sweeteners](#)
- [10 Principles of Intuitive Eating](#)

## Upcoming Events & Classes

We offer classes on a variety of nutrition topics including:

- Healthy Eating for Pregnancy
- Feeding Babies
- Mealtime Struggles (Picky Eating)
- Preventing or managing chronic disease
- Registration details [here](#).

For a complete list of workshops that are available anywhere in the province click [here](#).

## Contact

If you have questions, contact your local Registered Dietitian at Community Health Services:

Medicine Hat	403-502-8200
Brooks	403-501-3300
Lethbridge	403-388-6666

For more information on this or other nutrition topics, go to [healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://healthyeatingstartshere.ca)



Questions? Email us at [publichealthnutrition.southzone@ahs.ca](mailto:publichealthnutrition.southzone@ahs.ca)