

ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle

Not So Sweet

Breaking up is hard to do — but from diabetes to mental health, here's why it's critical to your health.

Added sugar is everywhere. Since a good portion of the added sugar we consume is hidden in prepared foods like ketchup, salad dressing, peanut butter, and canned fruits, you have to pay close attention to food labels to even realize that the food contains added sugar. As we have included more prepared foods in our diet over the last 3 decades, our intake of added sugar has increased a whopping 30%.

Some foods naturally contain sugar—fruits, 100% fruit juices, milk and other dairy products, and even vegetables. This sugar, perhaps because it is combined with other nutrients (fiber, protein, fat), seems to be processed differently in the body. We know this because gastric bypass patients who get sick (dumping syndrome) from added sugars generally tolerate these naturally-occurring sugars. These foods also contribute important nutrients to the diet and, in the right balance, are part of a healthy diet.

Our bodies need glucose, a form of sugar, for life. We keep a constant level of glucose in our bloodstream so that every cell has access to it. But we don't need to consume sugar, especially added sugar (sugar not naturally occurring, but added to a food to make it taste sweeter) in our diets to main-

tain a healthy amount of glucose in our bloodstreams. We have mechanisms that allow us to produce glucose from the simple (sugars) and complex carbohydrate, protein and fat in our diet.

The damage to our health and well-being from excess added sugar in our diets is becoming recognized by the medical community. The American Heart Association recommends that women limit added sugar to 25 grams and men 37 grams a day. The 2015 Dietary Guideline Advisory Committee recommends that we keep added sugar to 10% of daily calories and the World Health Organization recommends limiting added sugars to 10% of daily calories stating that reducing it to 5% would result in further benefits. Why are these health organizations calling on a reduction in added sugar intake? Too much added sugar in our diets day-after-day, year-after-year isn't healthy and leads to a slew of chronic health issues.

Cavities. Eating sweets causes the germs in your mouth to create acid. It is this acid that eats holes in your teeth, forming cavities. Frequent consumption of sweets throughout the day, especially those that are sticky or acidic

(like soft drinks), bathe your teeth in acid and accelerate the formation of cavities.

Raging Hunger. A chronic intake of the sugar fructose can lead to leptin resistance. Leptin is the hormone that tells your body, "I'm full." If you develop **leptin resistance**, you never get that full signal, and develop a drive to eat that just won't quit. You can imagine that doesn't fare well for weight control.

Insulin Resistance. Over time, too much added sugar in the diet (in addition to inactivity and obesity) can cause insulin resistance. Insulin regulates the amount of sugar that is in the bloodstream. One analogy is that insulin is like a key that opens the door to let blood sugar out of the bloodstream and into the cells where it can be converted to energy. When someone becomes resistant to insulin, the body produces more and more insulin in an effort to regulate blood sugar. This results in high levels of both glucose



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(sugar) and insulin in the blood. Insulin resistance can also result in excess fat storage in muscle and liver tissue.

Diabetes. When your body is not able to convert blood sugar into energy and the blood sugar rises to an unhealthy level, diabetes develops. Although the relationship between consuming large amounts of added sugar and developing diabetes is murky, scientists have found that **drinking sugary beverages** is associated with the development of diabetes. Diabetes can have devastating effects on a person's quality of life.

Weight Gain. Want to gain 15 pounds in a year? Just drink a single soft drink each day. It's as simple as that and each additional serving increases the odds of obesity. Obesity is a complex disease so it isn't fair to say that a high sugar intake causes obesity, but it's clearly a contributing factor for many.

Addiction. Sugar, for some people, can be downright addictive. Not surprising, since it has a powerful effect on the reward system in our brain, similar to nicotine and cocaine. Strong cravings for sugar can be hard to resist and can drive overeating.

Joint pain. Elevated intake of processed sugar can lead to inflammation, **causing joint pain** and other inflammation-related diseases.

Brain Dysfunction. A **high-sugar diet is implicated** in learning and memory problems, anxiety and depression.

Heart Disease. One recent study showed that people who get 10–24.9% of their calories from sugar have a 30% increase in death from cardiovascular disease as compared to those who get less than 10% of calories from sugar. Those who consume more than 25% of calories from sugar have an even higher risk of death. It's not clear why sugar has such a big impact. It may be due to the increase in blood pressure associated with sugary drinks, the liver pumping out fat into the bloodstream in response to simple sugar intake or some other yet-to-be identified cause. According to this study, excess sugar in our diet has the potential to take years off of our lives.

It may be hard to resist desserts, pastries, chocolate bars, sodas, even fruit juices. However, the **American Journal of Clinical Nutrition** warns that processed sugars trigger the release of inflammatory messengers called cytokines. Sugar goes by many names so look out for any word ending in "ose," e.g. fructose or sucrose on ingredient labels.

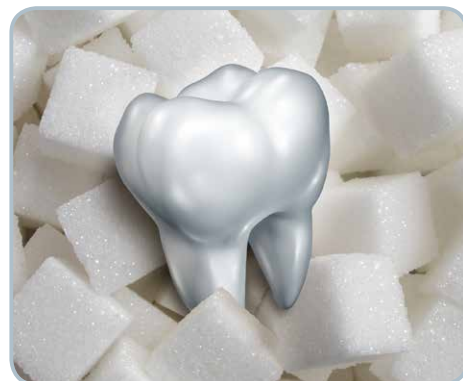
Arthritis Foundation

Blunting of the Stress Response. Headline: "Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages can suppress the hormone cortisol and stress responses in the brain." Initially, the news that added sugar can relieve stress seems to be positive and really not too surprising. Many people "treat themselves" with something sweet after a stressful day. The concern is that under-reacting (or numbing yourself) to stress is not healthy and may lead to a habit of overeating sweets with all the negative consequences that brings. It's better to learn healthy mechanisms to manage stress.

To limit added sugars, build your diet on healthy unprocessed foods as much as possible. Select low-fat protein sources (lean meat/fish/poultry, low-fat dairy, beans), fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, and whole grains. Barix Clinics recommends that you limit added sugars to 2 grams or less per serving. Do this by looking at the nutrition facts label to see how much sugar is in a serving. Then check out the ingredient listing. If the product has more than 2 grams of sugar per serving and you see an "added sugar" term within the first five ingredients listed, put it back.

Names for Added Sugar

- Brown rice syrup
- Brown sugar
- Cane sugar
- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Dextrose
- Fruit juice concentrates
- Glucose
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Invert sugar
- Maltose
- Malt sugar
- Maple syrup
- Molasses
- Organic brown rice syrup
- Organic cane syrup
- Raw sugar
- Sorghum
- Sugar
- Syrup



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Recipes

Banana Nut Cookies

- 2 cups regular oats, uncooked
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 medium bananas, mashed
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together oats, raisins, walnuts and salt in a large bowl. In another bowl, mix together banana, oil, and vanilla. Add banana mixture to dry ingredients and mix well. Let stand 15 minutes.

Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until lightly golden. Cool cookies on wire racks. Makes 36 cookies.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER COOKIE: 77 calories, 2 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 9 grams carbohydrate, 33 mg sodium.



Apricot Chicken Breast

Adapted from Splenda.com

- 6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 1 cup sugar-free apricot preserves
- 1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon SPLENDA®

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9x13 inch baking dish with pan spray and arrange chicken breasts in a single layer. Combine the apricot preserves, vinegar and SPLENDA®; pour over the chicken. Cover and bake for 50 minutes. Remove cover and bake for 10 more minutes. Makes 6 servings.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING: 180 calories, 25 grams protein, 3 grams fat, 20 grams carbohydrate, 60 mg sodium.

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Tips must be submitted by October 31, 2015. Please send comments, ideas, recipes and "It Worked For Me" tips to Deb Hart, RD, LD at dhart@foresthealth.com.

