

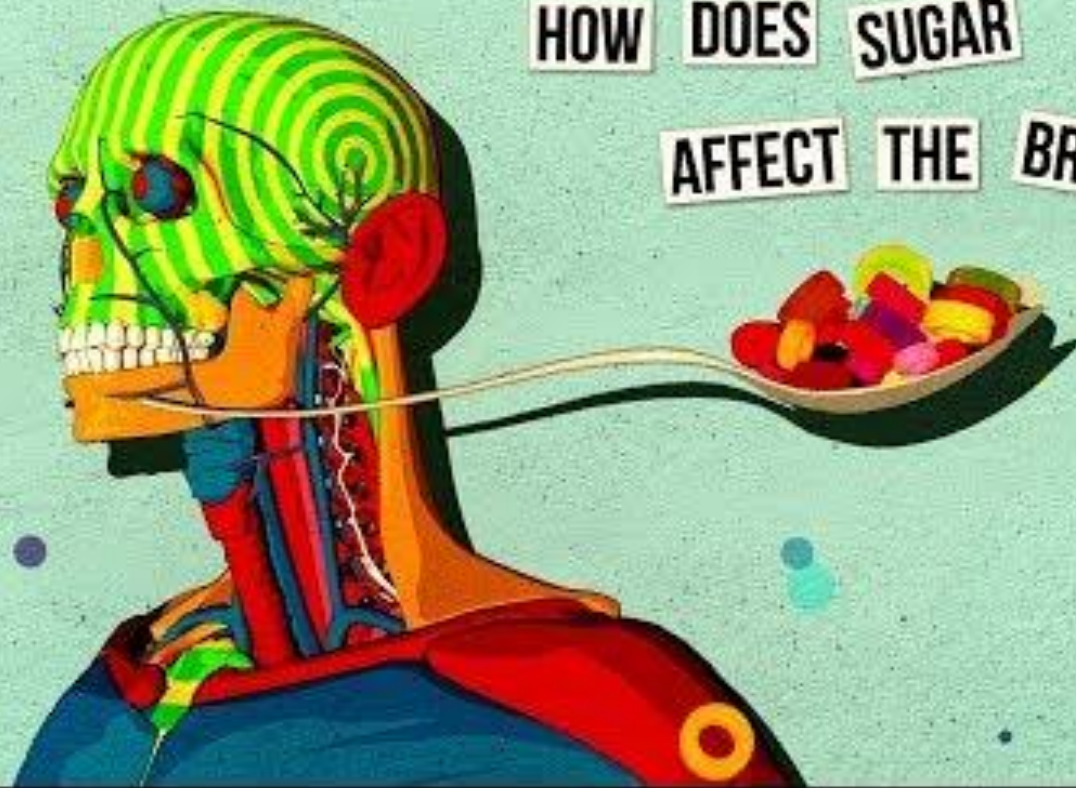


Neuro Café: Good sugar vs bad sugar

Wednesday 16th November 2022

HOW DOES SUGAR

AFFECT THE BRAIN ?



Why should we watch how much sugar we eat?

Eating too much sugar can have long term severe health complications such as:

- dental problems
- fatty liver disease
- diabetes
- weight gain
- heart disease





What is 'good' sugar?

As a rule, 'good' sugars are found in healthy whole foods, such as:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Milk

We don't have to watch how much of these we eat because they are not 'added' or 'free' sugars.



What is 'added' or 'free' sugar?

All sugar that is added to our food is classified as 'free sugars'. They are easy to eat in excess, for example, you may drink a can of soft drink but you would not eat four apples in one sitting, as the fibre in fresh fruit makes you feel full.

Research suggests that added sugar is now the main source of sugar in our diets.

Free sugars are not necessary for a balanced diet.



These 'Bad' sugars are commonly found in highly refined, processed foods.

Refined sugars are extremely easy to eat in excess because they taste delicious. For example, you may easily drink a sugary smoothie but you wouldn't eat 4 apples in one sitting.

The type of sugars most of us in the UK eat too much of are 'free sugars', which are:

- Any sugars added to food or drinks. These include sugars in biscuits, chocolate, flavoured yoghurts, breakfast cereals and fizzy drinks. These sugars may be added at home, or by a chef or other food manufacturer.
- Sugars in honey, syrups (such as maple, agave and golden), nectars (such as blossom), and unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juices and smoothies. **The sugars in these foods occur naturally but still count as free sugars.**

How much sugar should we be eating?

The government recommends that free sugars – sugars added to food or drinks, and sugars found naturally in honey, syrups, and unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies and purées – should not make up more than 5% of the energy (calories) you get from food and drink each day.

This means:

Adults should have no more than 30g of free sugars a day, (roughly equivalent to 7 sugar cubes).



What does our daily intake look like?

SUGAR BY NUMBERS

The World Health Organisation recommends we aim to consume no more than 6 tsp of free sugar per day

6 tsp
per day



Vs



7 tsp
in a 330ml can
of fizzy drink



6 tsp
in 45g of
milk chocolate



5 tsp
in a 415g can
of baked beans



4 tsp
in 50g serving of
sugary nut flakes

15 tsp - added sugar consumed by the average UK adult every day





Tips to cut down on 'free' sugars

Reducing sugar in drinks

- Instead of sugary fizzy drinks or sugary squash, go for water, lower-fat milk, or sugar-free, diet or no-added-sugar drinks. While the amount of sugar in whole and lower-fat milk is the same, choosing lower-fat milk reduces your saturated fat intake.
- Even unsweetened fruit juices and smoothies are sugary, so limit the amount you have to no more than 150ml a day.
- If you prefer fizzy drinks, try diluting no-added-sugar squash with sparkling water.
- If you take sugar in hot drinks or add sugar to your breakfast cereal, gradually reduce the amount until you can cut it out altogether. Alternatively, switch to a [sweetener](#).
- The NHS Change4Life website has more tips to help you [cut back on sugary drinks](#).



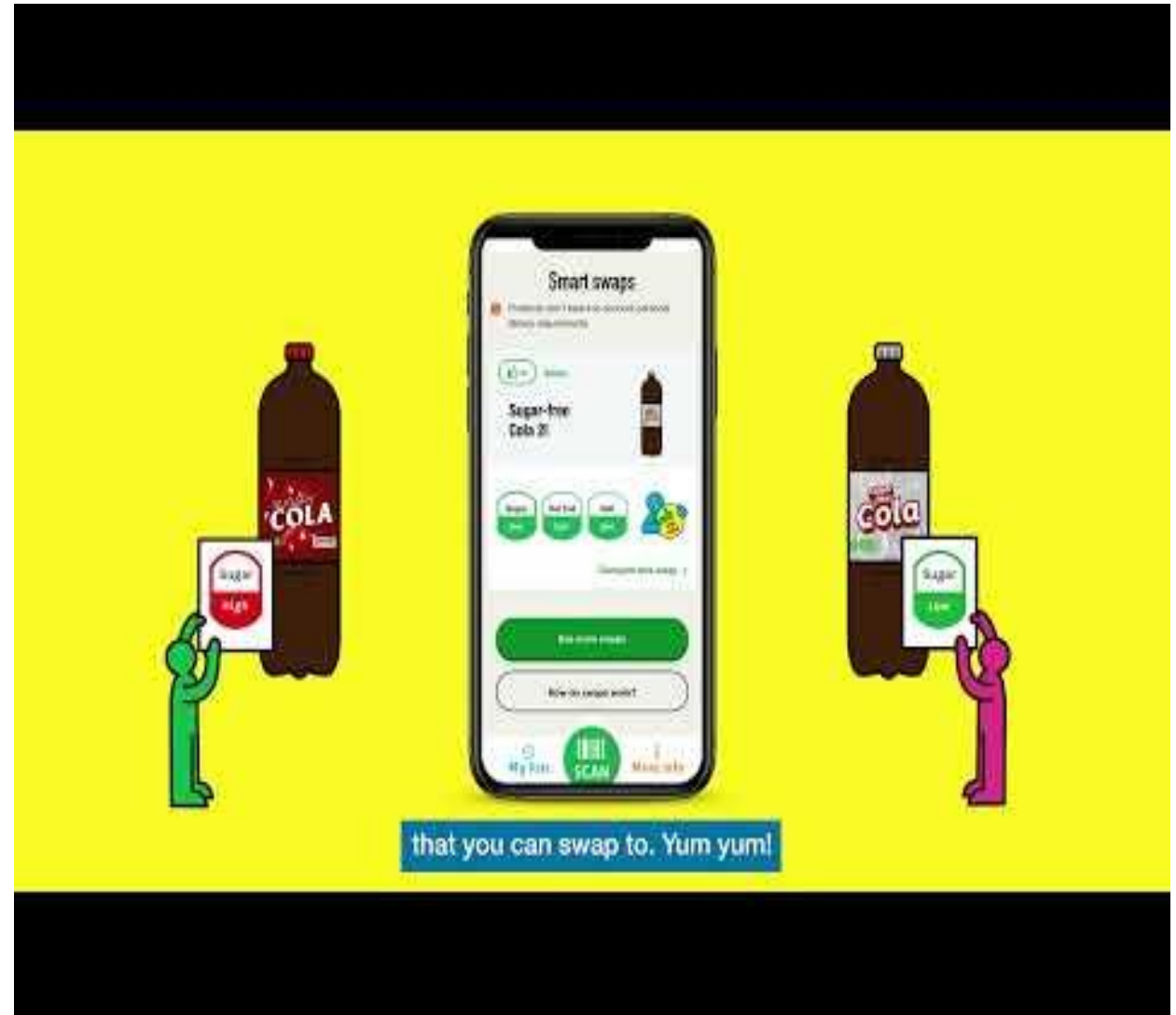


Reducing sugar in food

- Rather than spreading high-sugar jam, marmalade, syrup, chocolate spread or honey on your toast, try a lower-fat spread, reduced-sugar jam or fruit spread, sliced banana or lower-fat cream cheese instead.
- Check [nutrition labels](#) to help you pick the foods with less added sugar, or go for the reduced- or lower-sugar version.
- Try reducing the sugar you use in your recipes. It works for most things except jam, meringues and ice cream.
- Choose tins of fruit in juice rather than syrup.
- Choose unsweetened wholegrain breakfast cereals that are not frosted, or coated with chocolate or honey.

Reducing sugar in food

- Choose unsweetened cereal and try adding some fruit for sweetness, which will contribute to your 5 A Day. Sliced bananas, dried fruit and berries are all good options.
- The [Food Scanner app](#) from Change4Life can help you check how much sugar you are having. Using your smartphone, the app can scan the barcode on food packets to find out exactly how much sugar is in it. Get it on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).
- Find more ways of [cutting sugar out of your diet](#).



Food labels

- It's important to look for the "of which sugars" figure on nutrition labels, which is part of the carbohydrate information. While this does not tell you the amount of free sugars, it's a useful way of comparing labels and can help you choose foods that are lower in sugar overall.
- Look for the "Carbohydrates of which sugars" figure on the nutrition label.
- Products are considered to either be high or low in sugar if they fall above or below the following thresholds:

high: more than 22.5g of total sugars per 100g

low: 5g or less of total sugars per 100g





The "of which sugars" figure describes the total amount of sugars from all sources – free sugars, plus those from milk, and those present in fruit and vegetables. For example

- plain yoghurt may contain as much as 8g per serving, but none of these are free sugars, as they all come from milk.
- The same applies to an individual portion of fruit. An apple might contain around 11g of total sugar, depending on the size of the fruit selected, the variety and the stage of ripeness.

But sugar in fruit is not considered free sugars unless the fruit is juiced or puréed.

This means food containing fruit or milk will be a healthier choice than one containing lots of free sugars, even if the 2 products contain the same total amount of sugar. You can tell if the food contains lots of added sugars by checking the ingredients list.



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Ingredients list

You can get an idea of whether a food is high in free sugars by looking at the ingredients list on the packaging.

Sugars added to foods and drinks must be included in the ingredients list, which always starts with the ingredient that there's the most of.

This means that if you see sugar near the top of the list, the food is likely to be high in free sugars.

Watch out for other words used to describe the sugars added to food and drinks, such as cane sugar, honey, brown sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit juice concentrate/purées, corn syrup, fructose, sucrose, glucose, crystalline sucrose, nectars (such as blossom), maple and agave syrups, dextrose, maltose, molasses and treacle.

Why is so hard to give up sugar?

- We associate sugar with pleasure, due to live experiences and a sugar 'high'.
- Throughout our lives we have associated sugar with pleasure. It is given as a form of reward and we consume it at celebrations.
- When we consume free sugars, they are quickly absorbed by our bloodstream and we experience pleasure and an energy boost. But then we have a 'sugar crash'. These make us crave more sugar and the cycle of cravings and crashes continues.
- But just as we have learned to derive pleasure from sugar, we can also teach our tastebuds to enjoy foods that are less sweet. But this takes times, so stick with it.



Sugar swaps



Beat **cravings** with **fat** and **protein**



Swap **sugary drinks** for **fizzy water**



Try **sugar substitutes**



Look out for **hidden sugars**





Is honey 'healthy'?

It's not 'unhealthy' in moderation, but it is still 'added' sugar.

When we think of sugar, we often think of table sugar, but it is a blanket term for sweet-tasting, energy dense carbohydrates.

Table sugar consists of two simple sugars bonded together. These simple sugars are glucose and fructose. Honey is also made up of glucose and fructose. It is commonly believed that honey is a healthier alternative to sugar. This isn't true; honey is a sugar.

Honey, maple syrup, agave nectar and rice malt syrup are all in the 'free sugars' club and need to be restricted.

NO SUGAR THANK YOU



IM ALREADY SWEET ENOUGH