

# Tips to cut back on added sugars



While it's important to watch the amount of sodium in your diet, you should also pay attention to added sugars. Added sugars, also known as caloric sweeteners, provide calories but few or no vitamins and minerals. If you go over your calorie needs—calories you eat equaling calories you use—you may gain weight.

## How do you know whether a food contains added sugars?

On packaged foods, look on the ingredient list. The ingredients are listed in order of amount by weight from most to least. Foods that have added sugars as one of the first few ingredients may be high in total sugars. Check the Nutrition Facts label to see the amount of sugars per serving of the food. The sugars listed include naturally occurring sugars (like those in fruit and milk) as well as those added to a food or drink. When you see sugar on the Nutrition Facts label, keep in mind: **four grams of sugar equals about one teaspoon and about 16 calories.** For example, a 12-fluid ounce soft drink with 150 calories could have about 10 teaspoons of sugar.

## By any other name

Typical names of added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose and syrup. Don't be deceived, sometimes the label will say "sugar-free" even though the food contains sugars listed by different names.

**Turn the page to find out how to keep some sweets in your life.**



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# Everything in moderation

There may not be a lot of room in a healthy eating plan for foods loaded with sugar. Those foods are also generally low in vitamins, minerals and nutrients that are important for good health. But you don't have to go to the other extreme of eating no sugar at all.

Often special foods like cake, pie and cookies are part of family celebrations and social gatherings. It is unrealistic to think that you will not indulge occasionally, but that doesn't mean you have to completely blow your healthy eating plan. By using self control, you can make a little room for a few sweet treats.

## **It's a matter of planning**

Portion size is key for once-in-a-while foods. If you usually cut a cake into eight pieces, try cutting it into 12 pieces. Eat one scoop of ice cream on a waffle cone instead of two scoops on a cookie cone. Share a piece of pie with a friend. Eat a small brownie, not a giant one. Stop at two or three cookies. Sample, then step away from the buffet table.

Plan ahead. If you know you will be confronted with temptation at an event tomorrow, eat lighter today. Or try adding some extra exercise into the mix. Walk a little longer. Park farther away from the door to your office. Take the stairs. This will go a long way to help balance the extra calories.

Treat yourself by visiting **Blue Access<sup>®</sup>** for Members and receive sweet advice from the Personal Health Manager's *Ask A Dietitian* feature.