

# Reducing Sugar Intake

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Limiting sugar intake is an important part of eating a healthy diet, especially for people diagnosed with diabetes. Approximately 30.3 million adults in the United States have diabetes – even if they don't know it. Taking steps to prevent or improve diabetes is important to lifelong health.

## Did you know?

- Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 – 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes in the U.S.
- Diabetes is the number one cause of adult blindness, amputation and kidney failure.
- One in four people with diabetes aren't aware they have diabetes.
- The number of adults diagnosed with diabetes has tripled in the last 20 years.

The good news is that Type 2 diabetes is preventable and can be improved through a healthy diet and exercise. One healthy habit that directly affects diabetes is sugar intake. By lowering your sugar intake and monitoring the foods you eat, Type 2 diabetes can be avoidable. Read nutrition labels to help you recognize and monitor how much sugar is in the foods you're buying and eating.

## Naturally-occurring sugar vs. added sugar

Naturally-occurring sugar is sugar that is found *naturally* in foods, such as fruits, dairy and vegetables. Added sugar is any sugar or caloric sweetener added to foods, including cane sugar, white sugar or honey. Both sugars should be monitored, but in different ways. Naturally-occurring sugar should be limited by following portion guidelines, while added sugar should be avoided or used in moderation.

## Tips for reducing sugar intake

Sugar is in many things we consume – from fruits and vegetables to drinks. Here are a few easy ways you can reduce your sugar intake:

- Avoid processed foods as much as possible which tend to have more sugars than fresh foods. Getting most of your food from the outer aisles of the grocery store can help to ensure a lower sugar intake by reducing the amount of added sugar you're eating.
- Limit your carbohydrate (breads, legumes, juices) intake. It's recommended that older adults eat 130 grams of carbohydrates a day, so when eating these foods, follow the MyPlate portion guide ([MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)) and read the nutrition labels.
- Drink more water and less sugary drinks like soda and juice. This helps keep you hydrated while reducing the amount of added sugars consumed.
- Reduce or avoid lactose in your diet. Choose lactose-free milks and low-lactose cheeses such as Swiss or feta cheese.
- Replace sugar with healthy substitutes when baking. You can replace white sugar in baking recipes with unsweetened applesauce. This will create a delicious treat while reducing the amount of sugar.

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