



to reduce your risk of heart
and circulatory diseases



Sugar and heart and circulatory diseases

Eating too much sugar can lead you to put on weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of having a heart attack, stroke and developing Type 2 diabetes.

You can reduce your risk of these health problems by making small and simple changes to cut back on how much sugar you eat. Becoming aware of where your calories come from is the first step towards controlling your weight and protecting your heart.

How much sugar can I eat?

Aim to eat less than 30g of free sugars a day.



30g = 7 cubes

Different types of sugar

All sugars are a type of carbohydrate found in many of the foods we eat. But there are different types of sugars and they mean different things for your health. We need to cut down on the sugars that are bad for our health – free sugars.

Free sugars are:

Added to junk food, some cereals and flavoured yoghurts. These foods should be avoided.



Free sugars are:

Naturally found in honey, syrups and fruit juices. These are the ones we need to eat less of.



Choose these instead:

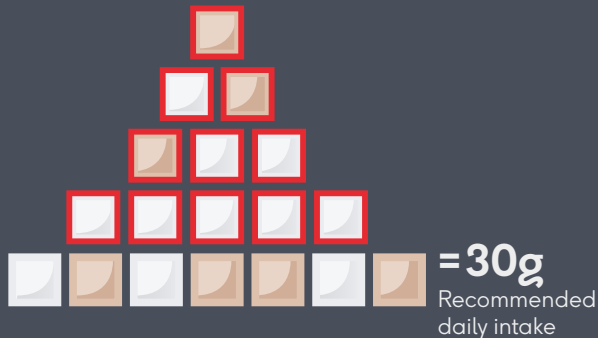
Dairy, fruit and vegetables contain natural sugars. And they also give us the vitamins, minerals and fibre our bodies need. So you don't need to cut down on them.



How free sugars can add up



72g



Simple swaps

Here are some easy swaps you can make to cut down on free sugars:

High in free sugars

No free sugars



Cola drink



Diet cola



Fruit yoghurt



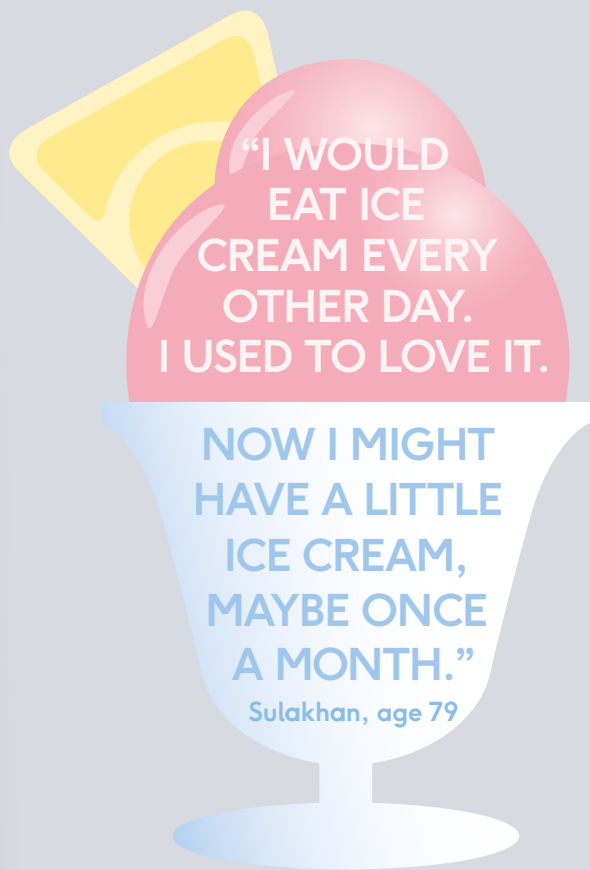
Plain yoghurt with strawberries



Orange juice



Fruit salad



Look at labels

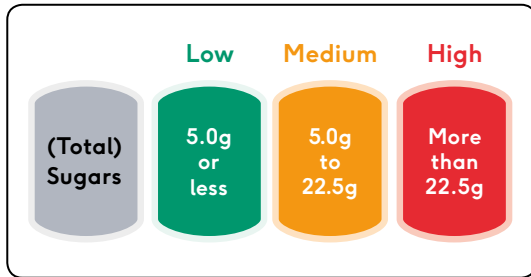
Reading the labels on your food can help you work out how much sugar you're eating. Most packets have colour coded nutritional labels. If you're trying to eat less sugar, avoid foods with a **red** label for 'sugars' and try to eat mostly **ambers** and **greens**.

Food labels currently only say how much total sugar a product contains – that's free sugars plus any naturally occurring sugars. So while it doesn't tell you the amount of free sugars, it's a useful way of comparing foods and can help you to choose foods that are lower in sugar overall.

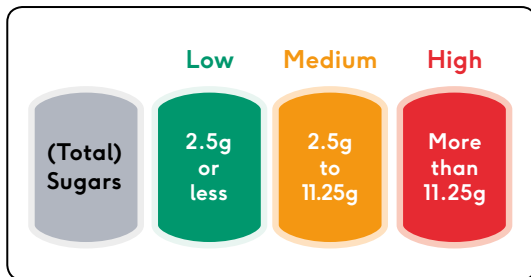
“If it's red, I just don't buy it.”

Shirley, age 53

Criteria for 100g food



Criteria per 100ml of drink



Read the back of packs

If a food packet doesn't have a colour coded label, there are other ways to find out if it's high in sugar.

On the back of packets, look for the 'Carbohydrates of which sugars' number. It will tell you how many grams of sugar are in a portion as well as per 100g.

	Per 100g	Per portion
Energy	1515kj 360kcal	760kj 180kcal
Protein	11.0g	5.5g
Carbohydrate	60.4g	30.2g
of which sugars	1.5g	0.8g
Fat	8.1g	4.1g
of which saturates	1.6g	0.8g
monounsaturates	3.8g	1.9g
polyunsaturates	2.7g	1.4g
Fibre	8.5g	4.3g

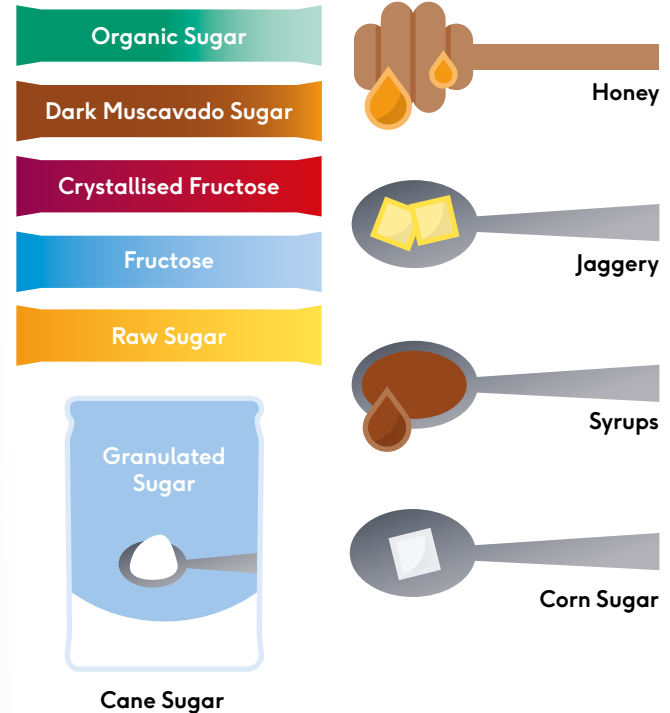
Read the ingredients list

If food doesn't have a label, you need to read the ingredients on the back of a packet. If sugar is near the top of the list, it's one of the main ingredients. There are many different words for sugar, but all these are free sugars you need to cut back on.

Ingredients: Corn Meal, Whole Grain Wheat, **Sugar**, **Molasses**, Sunflower Oil and/or Canola Oil, **Fructose**, Corn Starch, **Brown Sugar Syrup**, **Honey**, Salt, Baking Soda, Calcium Carbonate, Soy Lecithin, Dextrose, Trisodium Phosphate.

Good to know: Brown sugar and honey are not healthier than white sugar – they are just sugar in a different form.

Types of sugar



Simple swaps

Watching your sugar intake doesn't mean you have to change your whole diet. These simple swaps will help you reduce your sugar intake.



Sugary cereal or granola



Porridge



Chocolate bar



Handful of dried fruit and unsalted nuts



Blueberry muffin



Plain scone



2 chocolate digestive biscuits



2 Rich Tea biscuits



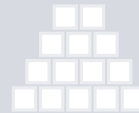
Drinking your sugar

It's easy to drink lots of sugar without knowing it.

Just choosing no added sugar or sugar free syrups can make a big difference.



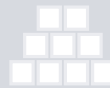
Flavoured latte



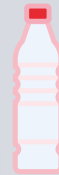
Iced coffee



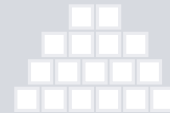
Cola drink



Diet cola



1.5 litre bottle flavoured water



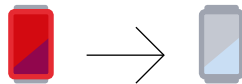
Water

Sugar in alcohol

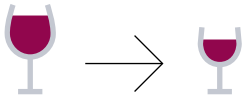
Some types of alcohol are already high in sugar, and others are often mixed with other sugary drinks. Avoid drinking alcopops and alcohol mixed with energy drinks – they are packed with sugar and other unhealthy additives.

Simple swaps

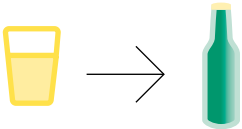
Mixers – choose soda or low calorie or diet options of soft drinks



Wine – choose a small glass instead of a large one



Beer – choose a bottle instead of a pint



Check the cupboards

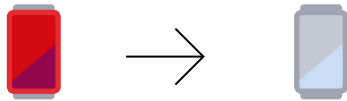
Condiments like salad dressings, ketchup and BBQ sauce often contain added hidden sugar, so go for low-sugar options or swap them for homemade dressings.

Ready-made sauces for pasta, curries, stir-fries or BBQs can also add a lot of sugar to something that looks like a healthy meal.



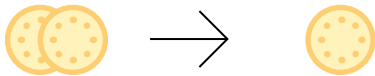
Small changes make a big difference

If you're trying to lose weight, cutting back on the sugary treats you eat most often can make a big difference.



Swapping cola for diet cola for a year can lead to a weight loss of:

14lb (6.4kg)



Having 1 biscuit a day instead of 2, for a year, can lead to a weight loss of:

8.6lb (4 kg)

bhf.org.uk

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Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 people in the UK. They cause heartbreak on every street. But if research can invent machines to restart hearts, fix arteries in newborn babies, build tiny devices to correct heartbeats, and give someone a heart they weren't born with – imagine what's next.

We fund research into all heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors. Heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, vascular dementia, diabetes and many more. All connected, all under our microscope. Our research is the promise of future prevention, cures and treatments.

The promise to protect the people we love. Our children. Our parents. Our brothers. Our sisters. Our grandparents. Our closest friends.

You and the British Heart Foundation. Together, we will beat heartbreak forever.

Beat heartbreak forever.

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