

# All About SWEETENERS

*Added* sugars are found in processed foods to increase their sweet taste, make them more shelf stable and help baked goods brown and crust. These sweeteners also add calories to the diet, but provide no other nutrition (such as vitamins or fiber). To maximize weight loss, and prevent dumping syndrome, avoid *added* sugars.

The Nutrition Facts label will list the grams of sugar per serving of food. However, it doesn't distinguish between *added* sugars and naturally occurring sugars (more on that below). It is the *added* sugars you need to avoid. To determine if the grams of sugar listed are *added* sugars, you need to read the Ingredient List and avoid foods that contain any of these words in the ingredient list:

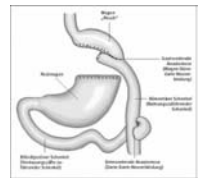
**Calorie Math:**  
**4 grams of sugar = 1 tsp sugar = 16 calories**  
 (so a food that has 40 grams of *added* sugar – like a can of soda – has 10 tsp of sugar and 160 calories).

## ADDED SUGARS

Sugar aka table sugar, granulated sugar, white sugar, cane sugar, beet sugar, sucrose	Made from beet sugar or cane sugar, it is refined to a nice, bright white. Typically added to tea, coffee and baked goods.
Corn syrup	A thick, sweet syrup made from cornstarch, it is not as sweet as sugar but is less expensive. Typically found in baked goods and pecan pie!
High-fructose corn syrup	This is corn syrup that has been treated to have a higher ratio of fructose to glucose, yielding a sweeter taste. Typically found in soft drinks, fruit drinks and baked goods.
Invert sugar	Available only in a liquid, it is white sugar that has been heated with water and acid to breakdown some of the sucrose, resulting in a sweeter taste. Typically found in making candies and syrups.
Brown sugar aka Light brown sugar, Dark brown sugar	This sugar's distinctive brown color is due to the presence of molasses. It is either a partially refined sugar with some residual molasses content, or molasses are added to refined white sugar. Light brown sugar is 3.5% molasses. Dark brown sugar is 6.5% molasses. Typically found in cookies, cake and other baked goods.
Molasses aka blackstrap molasses	A thick syrup left over after making sugar from sugar cane, it has a distinctive dark brown color and was the sweetener of choice before refined sugar came along. Blackstrap molasses is a type of molasses that results from the third boiling of the sugar syrup. Typically used in baked beans and gingerbread.
Honey	Bees make this sweet syrupy fluid from the nectar collected from flowers and stored in hives as food. Typically used to sweeten tea or yogurt or used on baked goods
Maple syrup aka maple sugar	The syrup is made by boiling off water from the sap of a maple tree. Maple sugar is made by boiling the syrup even further. Maple syrup is typically added to waffles, pancakes and oatmeal but is also in baked goods. The sugar is sold in pressed blocks or as translucent candy.

## DUMPING SYNDROME

Patients with a roux-en-y gastric bypass are at risk for dumping syndrome.



Dumping syndrome occurs when the undigested contents of your stomach are transported or "dumped" into your small intestine too rapidly. Drinking fluids too soon after a meal or eating too much at a meal may cause dumping, but the primary culprit of dumping syndrome is *added sugar*. Dumping can occur anywhere from 30 minutes to 4 hours after eating an offending food. The symptoms of dumping syndrome are diarrhea, cold sweats, nausea, vomiting, and/or light-headedness. Dumping syndrome does not occur with the sleeve gastrectomy or adjustable gastric banding surgeries. However, you must still avoid concentrated sweets to maximize weight loss.

Powdered sugar aka confectioners' sugar, icing sugar	Granulated sugar that has been crushed into a fine powder and combined with an anti-caking agent such as cornstarch. It is available in several degrees of fineness, designated by the number of Xs following the name. 6X is the standard confectioners' sugar. Typically used in icing and cake decorations.
Raw sugar aka natural brown sugar, demerara sugar, turbinado sugar, muscavado sugar, "sugar in the raw"	Less processed than white sugar, it is produced by extracting the juice from sugar cane, heating it to evaporate water and crystallize the sugar, then spinning in a centrifuge to remove some impurities and further dry the sugar. Typically used in as an alternative to brown sugar in baking and to sweeten beverages such as coffee and tea.
Glucose aka D-glucose, dextrose, corn sugar	This is the most simple form of sugar. It is produced commercially by breaking down long chains of starch from corn, maize, wheat, rice, etc. Typically found in bread, caramel, cookies and soda.
High maltose corn syrup	This is made from starch and consists of short chains of glucose molecules with a high maltose concentration. Typically found in candy, baked goods and beer.
Agave Nectar aka agave syrup	This sweetener is made from several species of the cactus-like agave plant, including blue agave. It is sweeter than sugar and thinner than honey. Typically used in beverages and desserts and on top of pancakes and waffles.
Fruit juice concentrate	100% fruit juice that has been processed and concentrated into a flavorless, colorless syrup. Typically found in canned products, juices, canned fruit and baked goods.
Fructose aka levulose, fruit sugar	This is a refined, simple sugar made from fruit juices, corn or corn syrup. Typically used in beverages, baked goods, ice cream and yogurt.
Barley malt syrup	This sweetener is produced from sprouted barley, and is about half as sweet as white sugar. It is dark brown, thick and sticky and possesses a strong distinctive flavor that can only be described as "malty". Typically used in baked goods.
Brown rice syrup aka rice syrup	Derived by culturing cooked rice with enzymes to break down the starches, then straining off the liquid and reducing it by cooking until the desired consistency is reached. It can also be found in a granulated version. Typically used in beverages.
Date sugar	Made from ground, dehydrated dates, it is often used in place of brown sugar. Typically found in sweets and baked goods.
Sucanat® aka whole cane sugar, organic sugar	Made from dehydrated sugar cane juice, it gets its darker color from the natural molasses content. Typically found in soy yogurt, puddings, breakfast cereals, cookies, pizza, veggie dogs, teas, juices, granola, mints, lozenges.
Splenda® Sugar Blend and Splenda® Brown Sugar Blend	This product is a mix of pure sugar (sucrose) and Splenda® (sucralose). It is not, therefore, sugar-free. However, it can be used in baking - substitute half a cup of SPLENDA® Sugar Blend for every full cup of sugar required in a recipe.

**EXAMPLE: Reading the Nutrition Facts label and the Ingredient List**

1 can soda

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size (369g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 150	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	13%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 40g	
Ingredients: Carbonated Water, High Fructose Corn Syrup, Caramel Color, Phosphoric Acid, Natural Flavors, Caffeine	

In this one can of soda, there are 40 grams of sugar (or 10 tsp of sugar). Is it *added* sugar? The only way to determine that is to read the ingredient list - 'high fructose corn syrup' is listed in the ingredients. Yes, this sugar is *added* sugar.

## ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Artificial sweeteners, also called *sugar substitutes*, are substances that are used instead of sucrose (table sugar) to sweeten foods and beverages. They are non-caloric and sweeter than sugar, so smaller amounts are needed to create the same level of sweetness. Artificial sweeteners are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Listed by both chemical and common name below, all of the following products below, except for stevia, are currently approved by the FDA for use as food additives.

Sucralose aka Splenda, E955	This artificial sweetener is a synthetic chemical made by chemically reacting sugar (sucrose) with chlorine. It is 600x sweeter than sugar and virtually calorie free. It is stable under heat so it can be used in home baking. Splenda granulated is designed to be used cup-for-cup in baking, cooking, and in beverages. (Watch out for Splenda Blends, which are 50% real sugar). Sucralose is often used in combination with the artificial sweetener acesulfame-K. Sucralose is regarded as a safe choice during pregnancy, although acesulfame-K is not. Typically found in no-sugar-added baked goods, frozen desserts, ice cream, soft drinks, and as a tabletop sweetener.
Neotame aka E961	This artificial sweetener is related to aspartame. It is 8,000x sweeter than sugar and virtually calorie free. It is often used in combination with sugar or other artificial sweeteners. Research suggests avoiding aspartame during pregnancy; it is unclear if a similar suggestion would be made for neotame. Neotame is relatively new on the market but typically found in baked goods and low calorie foods.
Acesulfame-K aka Sunett, Sweet One, Acesulfame-Potassium	This artificial sweetener is 200x sweeter than sugar and virtually calorie free. It is often used in combination with sucralose. Research suggests avoiding acesulfame-K during pregnancy. Typically found in diet drinks, sugar-free baked goods, chewing gum, and gelatin desserts.
Aspartame aka Equal, NutraSweet	This artificial sweetener is 200x sweeter than sugar and virtually calorie free. It is often used with other artificial sweeteners. Research suggests avoiding aspartame during pregnancy. Typically found in diet drinks and as a table top sweetener.
Saccharin aka SugarTwin, Sweet'N Low	This artificial sweetener is 350x sweeter than sugar and virtually calorie free. It may have a bitter or metallic aftertaste is large doses. It does not hold up well under high temperatures, such as baking. Research suggests avoiding saccharin during pregnancy. Typically found in diet drinks and as a table top sweetener.
Stevia aka Rebiana, Truvia, PureVia	Stevia, which is about 100 times sweeter than sugar, is obtained from the shrub, yerba dulce. Stevia extracts have been deemed GRAS or "generally recognized as safe" by the FDA but have not undergone the rigorous scientific testing as other food additives. Stevia, in limited amounts (<3 packets/day) is regarded as a safe choice during pregnancy. Typically found in diet drinks and as a table top sweetener.

### SAFETY WITH ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

The FDA, which regulates food additives such as artificial sweeteners, has established Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) levels for these products. The ADI represents an intake level that, if maintained each day throughout a person's lifetime, would be considered safe by a wide margin. It is set as the number of milligrams (mg) per kilograms (kg) of your body weight per day. However, the amount of artificial sweetener used in a food product is not listed on the label. As an example, to reach the ADI for aspartame (which is 50 mg/kg body weight per day), a 150-pound adult would need to consume 20 (12-ounce) cans of diet soda OR 42 (4-ounce) servings of sugar-free, diet gelatin OR 97 packets of tabletop sweetener in a single day. Research suggests the safest artificial sweeteners during pregnancy are Splenda and Stevia (stevia in small amounts as it may cause cancer in rats who eat very large amounts of it - try to limit yourself to 3 pkts/day). Research suggests avoiding Aspartame (eg: Nutra sweet and Equal), Saccharin (eg: Sweet'n'low) and Acesulfame Potassium (which is found in some foods with Splenda).

FOOD LABEL CLAIMS DEFINED

“Organic” food is defined by the USDA and defines how a food is produced. It does not indicate that a food is “healthy” or free of *added* sugars.



Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; or ionizing radiation. Before a product can be labeled "organic," a Government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure the farmer is following all the rules necessary to meet USDA organic standards. Companies that handle or process organic food before it gets to your local supermarket or restaurant must be certified, too.

The term “natural” is not government controlled but applies broadly to foods that are minimally processed and free of synthetic preservatives; artificial sweeteners, colors, flavors and other artificial additives; growth hormones; antibiotics; hydrogenated oils; stabilizers; and emulsifiers. A food labeled “natural” is not necessarily healthy or free of *added* sugars. In fact, since foods labeled “natural” will not contain artificial sweeteners, they are more likely to be sweetened with an *added* sugar.

Meat and poultry labeled “natural” is defined by the USDA, which requires these to be free of artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners, preservatives and ingredients that do not occur naturally in the food. Natural meat and poultry must be minimally processed in a method that does not functionally alter the raw product. In addition, the label should explain the use of the term natural, e.g., no artificial ingredients.

“No Added Sugars” and “Without Added Sugars” are claims that are regulated by the FDA. This claim is allowed if no sugar or sugar containing ingredient is added during processing. This food may also be labeled as “Unsweetened” (an unregulated term). However, this does not mean the food is low in total calories. This food may contain natural sugars (from dairy or fruit), artificial sweeteners or sugar replacers like sugar alcohols.

“Sugar Free” is a claim that is regulated by the FDA. This claim is allowed if there is < 0.5 g of sugar (added or naturally occurring) per serving.

SUGAR REPLACERS

Sugar replacers are synthetic sweeteners that contain fewer calories than sugar. They are not usually sweeter than sugar and are not used in home baking or cooking but can be found in many processed foods. All of the following are FDA approved for use as food additives. Any “sugar-free” or “no added sugar” food using sugar alcohols must list the grams of sugar alcohol in the product on the Nutrition Facts label (see examples below).

Sugar alcohols or polyols, include sactitol, sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysate (HSH), isomalt	Sugar alcohols are not absorbed well by the body, which means they provide (on average) 2 calories per gram. However, this malabsorption also means they can cause gastrointestinal distress such as bloating, gas, loose stools or diarrhea, especially if large amounts (above 20 to 30 grams) are consumed. Typically found in beverages, protein bars and sweets.
Polydextrose	This is a bulking agent made by combining dextrose (corn sugar) with sorbitol. The result is a slightly sweet, reduced-calorie (only one calorie per gram because it is poorly digested) bulking agent. The FDA requires that if a serving of a food would likely provide more than 15 grams of polydextrose, the label should advise consumers that "Sensitive individuals may experience a laxative effect from excessive consumption of this product." Typically found in Reduced-calorie salad dressings, baked goods, candies, puddings, frozen desserts.
Tagatose	This new synthetic additive is chemically related to fructose, but is poorly absorbed by the body. It yields only about one-third as many calories. Large amounts cause diarrhea, nausea, and flatulence.
Erythritol	This natural sugar alcohol that occurs naturally in fruits and fermented foods. It is virtually calorie-free but, unlike other sugar alcohols, does not cause uncomfortable gastrointestinal side effects. Typically found in diet drinks.

EXAMPLE: Reading the Nutrition Facts label and the Ingredient List

In this serving of sugar free candy, there is no sugar but there are 25 grams of sugar alcohols, which are listed separately on the Nutrition Facts label.

1 serving sugar-free candy

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 35 Pieces (40g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0 g	0%
Saturated Fat 0 g	0%
Trans Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol	
Sodium 0 mg	0%
Potassium	
Total Carbohydrate 37 g	12%
Dietary Fiber 8 g	32%
Sugars	
Sugar Alcohols 25 g	
Protein 0 g	

Ingredients:  
Milk Chocolate Flavored Sugar Free Coating [maltitol, cocoa butter, milkfat, soya lecithin, natural and artificial flavor], maltitol syrup, light cream, sorbitol, unsalted butter, partially hydrogenated palm kernal oil, whey protein, natural and artificial flavor, vanilla extract.

## NATURALLY OCCURRING SUGARS

Naturally occurring sugars are found in milk/dairy products and fruit/fruit products and are safe to consume. However, when looking at the grams of sugar listed on a Nutrition Facts label, you cannot tell if the grams of sugar listed are naturally occurring (which are fine) or *added* (which are not). You have to read the ingredient list to determine if the grams of sugar listed are *added* sugars.

### EXAMPLES: Reading the Nutrition Facts label and the Ingredient List

In the examples below, the 12 g of sugar listed on the Nutrition Facts label for the cup of milk are from the naturally occurring sugar in milk (there are no *added* sugar words in the ingredient list). The same applies to the 11 g of sugar listed on the Nutrition Facts label for the container of applesauce.

The 11 g of sugar listed on the container of yogurt Nutrition Facts label, however, is from the naturally occurring sugar from the milk to make the yogurt, plus *added* sugar from the fructose listed in the ingredient list. It is unclear, however, how many grams are the naturally occurring kind and how many grams are from the *added* sugar, fructose.

The sugar-free candy is sweetened with sugar alcohols, which are listed separately on the Nutrition Facts label. There are 25 g of sugar alcohol in a serving of this candy, which may cause gastrointestinal distress.

1 cup skim milk	1 container applesauce	1 container yogurt	1 serving sugar-free candy																																																																																																																										
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### How much is TOO much?

Many people want to know how many grams of sugar is the maximum they should see on the food label. There is no easy answer to this since naturally occurring sugar and *added* sugars are grouped together on the food label. The goal, however, is to have ZERO grams of *added* sugar in the diet.

Each patient's tolerance for sugar alcohols vary. Some people tolerate only a few grams before having GI distress while others tolerate more.

The bottom line for weight control, however, is CALORIES. Just because something has no *added* sugar doesn't mean it is low in calories or a healthy choice.