

Sugar Sleuths

Explorations for parents and their children ages 8-12

Americans today eat thirty times more sugar than our ancestors did 200 years ago! Work with your children to investigate your family's sugar consumption habits. Develop a plan for reducing sugar in your diet.



Measuring Sugar

4 grams = 1 teaspoon sugar
1 gram of sugar = 4 calories

Children Learn to

- ✦ read nutrition labels to determine the grams of sugar in packaged food
- ✦ identify products with the highest and lowest grams of sugar
- ✦ measure sugar with a teaspoon
- ✦ recommend ways to reduce their own sugar consumption

You Will Need

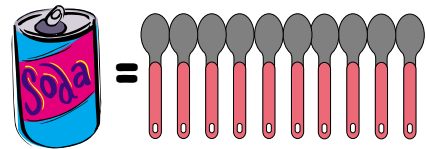
- ✦ measuring teaspoon
- ✦ variety of cereals, beverages, and snacks
- ✦ several plastic zipper-locking bags
- ✦ about one cup of white granulated sugar
- ✦ *Less Sugar Please!* data sheet
- ✦ pencil

The Activity

Comparing the Amounts of Sugar

- ✦ Select several products that you commonly eat and compare the grams of sugar per serving listed on the nutrition labels.
- ✦ Identify the product that is highest in sugar and the one that is lowest in sugar. Arrange them in order of the most sugar to the least sugar.
- ✦ Record your findings on the *Less Sugar Please!* data sheet.
- ✦ Use a measuring teaspoon to measure a quantity of sugar equal to the amount of grams in one serving of the product with the greatest amount of sugar.

A soda containing 40 grams of sugar contains **10 teaspoons of sugar!**



Where's the sugar?

Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving	% DV*	Amount/serving	% DV*
	Total Fat 1g	2%	Total Carb. 28g	9%
	Saturated Fat 0g	0%	Fiber 1g	3%
Serv. Size 1 box (32g)	Cholest. 0mg	0%	Sugars 15g	3%
Calories 120	Sodium 180mg	8%	Protein 1g	
Fat Cal. 10				

*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Don't forget . . .

If you and your children commonly use syrup or jelly with an item, be sure to add this extra source of sugar by estimating the number of teaspoons used.



Talking About Your Findings

- ✦ Families report that measuring the teaspoons of sugar in a product gives them a good picture of the amount of sugar and stimulates discussion about product choices.
- ✦ Talk about ways to reduce the amount of sugar at meals.
- ✦ Make a list of your children's ideas. Help them develop a plan for cutting back on sugar consumption.

Grocery Shopping

- ✦ Give your children the challenge of finding products with less sugar.
- ✦ Encourage them to practice their math skills by comparing prices as well as grams of sugar.
- ✦ Congratulate your children when they make a healthier choice.

More About Sugar. . .

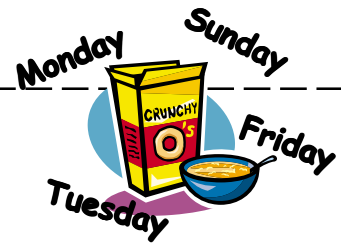
Sugar tastes great and your body needs a constant supply, so why worry about high sugar foods? The issue is often one of moderation. High sugar consumption is linked to tooth decay and obesity. Many high sugar foods lack other nutrients that are essential for proper growth and development. Nutritionists are recommending that we greatly reduce our consumption of processed sugar to less than 10% of our diet. According to the US Department of Agriculture, people consuming 2,000 calories a day should eat no more than about 10 teaspoons of refined sugar/day. That's 40 grams or one soda!

Internet Resource:

Food and Nutrition Information Center
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

Compromising...

Some youngsters have suggested keeping their favorite high sugar cereal but eating it fewer times a week. Children also suggest trying out cereals that contain less sugar.



Be a role model...

Children will be more willing to try low-sugar foods when their parents do so as well. Show your children that you enjoy low-sugar foods. (Fresh fruit makes a healthy and delicious compliment to low-sugar cereal!)



No, thanks!



