

Cutting Back on Sugar

Nowadays, processed foods and beverages are very much a part of the average American's diet. Unfortunately, most of these products contain "added sugar". Having too much "added sugar" in your diet along with a sedentary lifestyle can eventually lead to chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. The daily recommended limit of "added sugar" based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet is 32 grams (8tsp). To give you an idea, having just one can of soda pop can put you over the limit already! However, not all sugar is bad for you. Sugar that naturally occurs in fruit, vegetables and milk are not considered "added" sugars and therefore not part of the 32 gram daily maximum. In fact, these foods provide an abundance of vitamins and minerals and are important dietary staples. However, if you're eating more than the recommended daily limit, it means you're ingesting a lot of empty calories each day. Not only that, filling up on sweets instead of more nutritious foods such as vegetables, fish and whole grains can lead you to become deficient in important nutrients.

Here are some ways to cut back on your sugar intake:

- Know where sugar hides by reading Nutrition Facts tables on food packages. Choose foods that are lower in sugar.
- Switch from pop to sparkling water or just plain water. Unsweetened iced tea is a refreshing alternative too.
- Add less sugar to coffee or tea. Instead, add flavour with cinnamon, vanilla, cocoa or ginger.
- Instead of pastries or candy, snack on foods that are naturally sweet, such as fresh or dried fruit, or in-season vegetables such as tomatoes and carrots.
- Enjoy desserts with no sugar added, such as fruit.
- When you simply can't resist, enjoy smaller portions of sugary foods.