

# Making Sense of ADDED SUGARS on the New Nutrition Facts Label



## BACKGROUND

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) designed the Nutrition Facts Label to serve as an informational tool to assist consumers in constructing a healthy, balanced diet. The first label debuted in 1994. Before that, nutrition facts on packages didn't exist! In January 2020, the label underwent its first makeover and, among other changes, now includes information on added sugars.

## BREAKING DOWN THE SUGARS TERMINOLOGY

While the FDA recognizes the body handles sugars the same way, regardless of whether they are added or naturally occurring, added sugars are included on the Nutrition Facts label to help consumers follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans target of consuming up to 200 calories or 10% of total calories per day of added sugars.<sup>2</sup>

### What are Total Sugars?

Total Sugars is the sum of all sugars in a product. This includes sugars naturally present in many nutritious foods and beverages, such as sugars in milk and fruit, as well as any sugars that are added to a product like sugars added to cereal.

### What are Added Sugars?

The FDA defines added sugars as those sugars that are added to foods during processing or sugars packaged for consumers to add to foods and beverages on their own (like table sugar, brown sugar, pancake syrup, etc.). Added sugars do not include naturally occurring sugars that are found in milk, fruits, and vegetables or low and non-caloric sweeteners.

The word "includes" before Added Sugars on the label indicates that added sugars are included in the number of grams of Total Sugars in the product.

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>(140g)</b>
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g	<b>15%</b>
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 5mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22g	<b>8%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Sugars</b> 16g	
Includes 8g Added Sugars	<b>16%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 2g	<b>4%</b>
Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium	
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Sugars are found naturally in all plant and dairy foods and beverages and can also be added to foods and beverages for taste, as well as several functional reasons.

Some specific examples of FDA's definition of added sugars include:

- agave nectar
- brown rice syrup
- brown sugar
- coconut sugar
- concentrated fruit or vegetable juice
- confectioner's powdered sugar
- corn syrup
- dextrose
- fructose\*
- glucose\*
- high-fructose corn syrup
- honey
- invert sugar
- lactose\*
- malt syrup
- maltose\*
- maple sugar
- molasses
- nectars (e.g. peach nectar, pear nectar)
- raw sugar
- rice syrup
- sucrose\*
- sugar\*
- white granulated sugar

\*also naturally occurring sugars found in whole foods

## WHAT'S NOT ON THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL

There are many different alternative sweeteners used in foods and beverages and you won't find them on the label – they are only found in the ingredients list. Here are some examples of common low- and non-caloric sweeteners to look for:

- acesulfame k
- allulose
- aspartame
- monk fruit
- neotame
- saccharin
- stevia
- sucralose
- sugar alcohols (erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysate, isomalt, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol)
- tagatose



Real sugar comes from sugar beets and sugar cane plants.



# Sorting Out Sugar in Foods and in the Diet

## What is Daily Value?

A Daily Value is the reference amount for consumption of a nutrient over the course of an entire day. On the Nutrition Facts Label, most nutrients have a % Daily Value listed next to the amount of the nutrient in a serving. The % Daily Value indicates how one serving of that product contributes to the total day's intake for each nutrient.

- For added sugars, the Daily Value is 50 grams per day, or 10% (200 calories) of a 2,000 calorie diet. The Daily Value for added sugars is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans target for added sugars consumption.

There are 4 calories in 1 gram of sugar

- There is no Daily Value for total sugars because a recommended intake has not been established.

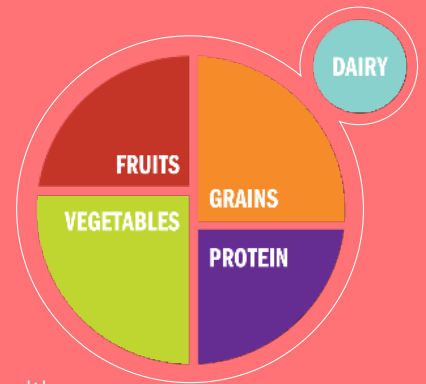
The % Daily Value also provides regulatory definitions to determine if products are "Low" or "High" in a nutrient.

- 5% DV or less is considered a LOW source
- 20% DV or more is considered a HIGH source

Note: Even if a single product is high or low in a nutrient, it is just one piece of the whole day's diet with other opportunities to get more or less of that nutrient throughout a day.

## Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans<sup>2</sup> states that added sugars can be included as part of an overall healthy dietary pattern that includes healthy choices from each of the MyPlate food groups. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans set a target for Americans to consume no more than 10% of calories per day from added sugars because intakes above this can make it difficult to achieve nutrient and food group recommendations within 2,000 calories.



## Making Sense of Low Sugar Claims

Many packaged foods and beverages contains claims on the front of the package. Manufacturers can't just make these up! The FDA defines what these claims mean. Below are some examples of claims related to sugar and what they mean.

**Sugar free, free of sugar, no sugar, zero sugar, without sugar, sugarless**

Product contains less than 0.5 grams of sugars per serving.

**No added sugar, without added sugar, or no sugar added**

No amount of sugars or any other ingredient that contains sugars that functionally substitute for added sugars is added to the product during processing or packaging.

**Reduced sugar, reduced in sugar, sugar reduced, less sugar, lower sugar, or lower in sugar**

Product contains at least 25% less sugar per serving than an appropriate reference food.

The Sugar Association believes that sugar intake should be one of balance, with primary focus placed on consuming nutrient-rich foods, appropriate total calories and an overall healthy lifestyle. The Dietary Guidelines suggest a target intake of added sugars of up to 10% of total calories. This recommendation is intended to help individuals construct a balanced diet that does not exceed their calorie needs and, it should be noted that, this target is not based on adverse health outcomes. Individuals may find the added sugars target and other Dietary Guidelines recommendations useful information for achieving a balanced lifestyle.



1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 21 CFR Part 101: Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels. Federal Register. 2014;79(41):11905.

2. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://DietaryGuidelines.gov).



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the  
**Sugar**  
association

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