

The dangers of excess sugar

You've heard it before, but it bears repeating—again and again. We're eating way too much sugar. According to government data, 200 years ago the average American consumed two pounds of sugar annually. Today, we eat more than 60 pounds of added sugar a year (yes, that's per person). At 113 teaspoons per pound, that's 6,780 teaspoons every 365 days.

Considering that the American Heart Association (AHA) recommends no more than six teaspoons of added sugar daily for women and nine for men, we're far over the advised cutoffs. And while some sugar sources are obvious—like soda, candy, or the sugar you add to your coffee—the sweet stuff can sneak into your diet in unexpected ways.

One of the best ways to cut back is to eliminate sugary drinks, like soda, sweet tea, lemonade, and the like. When it comes to the obvious sugary foods, like baked goods, ice cream, and other treats, be selective and strategic. I advise my clients to rank indulgences on a scale from 0-5, with 0 being just meh and 5 being a can't-live-without favorite. If something doesn't rate at least a 4, you probably won't regret forgoing it.

Enjoy goodies that are truly special, but make simple tweaks to create balance. For example, if you know you want a cookie after lunch, opt for a veggie-packed salad topped with lean protein instead of a carb-heavy sandwich or wrap. And to scope out concealed sources of sugar, become an avid label reader. Look at not just the grams of sugar on the Nutrition Facts panel but also the ingredient list for terms that end in -ose, like glucose, fructose, dextrose, and maltose, as well as the word syrup.

When the foundation of your diet is fresh, unprocessed whole food, and less of what you eat comes in a package, you'll automatically slash your added sugar intake. It may just be the most impactful change you can make for your everyday energy and overall health.



*This healthy living information is provided by
your Doctor of Chiropractic and the
Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP).*