

Where is Sugar Hiding in your Diet?

The British consume 2.25 million tonnes of sugar each year which is bad for our health. Where is this sugar hiding in our diets? Unfortunately this is not as easy as it sounds; sugar has so many aliases for example, sucrose, glucose, fructose, starch, carbohydrate, corn syrup and more that you almost need a degree in biochemistry to make sense of food labels. It is this confusion that the food industry thrives on and consumers become confused about.

Sugar is added in unexpected places for example savoury ready-made meals, soups, sandwich spreads, ketchup, baked beans, and cough mixtures. Slimming products are often loaded with sugar, for example in 2004 the Food Standards Agency found that Slim-fast contained 61.9 per cent sugar. The following is a brief list of high sugar foods.

1. Ready-Meals - a jar of ready-made Bolognese sauce can contain 7g of sugar per 100g which is double that of baked beans.
2. Yogurts – can contain tablespoons of sugar – especially the snack-style tubs and mini-pots branded for babies. The plain whole varieties are best and you can add fresh chopped fruit or a little honey (not for babies under 12 months old).
3. Baby Foods – even organic varieties can contain lots of sugar, it is a key preservative. Please try and cook for your babies – you can do large batches and freeze them in small amounts.
4. Biscuits, Pudding and Cakes – these are loaded with sugar, even the so called healthy varieties. Bake your own; at least you are then in control; add apples and other fruit to reduce sugar content.
5. Chocolate – it is best to choose varieties that contain 70 per cent cocoa, preferably plain, as it contains less sugar and more antioxidants.
6. Breakfast Cereals – avoid any that are coated with sugar, honey, or are “frosted”, even crispy muesli can contain lots of sugar. Choose instead Shredded whole wheat and Weetabix or corn flakes and muesli with “no added sugar”.
7. Drinks – Fizzy drinks can contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar each serving; also avoid sweetened juices and squash.

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