

Fact sheet



Sugar and your Kidneys

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate. Your body needs carbohydrates for energy, but it needs the right amount.

Eating too much sugar can lead to tooth decay and weight gain, increasing your risk of kidney and heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers.

Where is the sugar in our diet?



Naturally occurring sugars

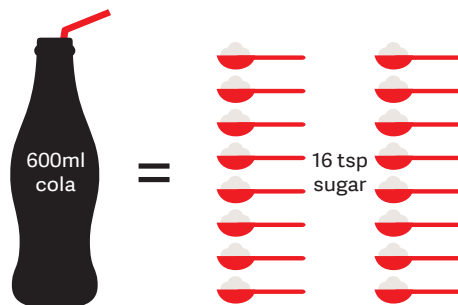
Naturally occurring sugars in whole foods such as fruit, wholegrains, vegetables and dairy products are not considered a problem. These sugars are released into your body slowly and keep you full for longer. A piece of fruit contains sugar, but also has many important vitamins, minerals, fibre and water.



Added sugar

Added sugar is found in many processed foods in large amounts. It may surprise you that many savoury sauces such as tomato sauce contains sugar as well as salt. Many of these foods contain few if any nutrients we need to stay healthy.

One 600ml soft drink per day = 23kg of sugar in one year.



Other names for sugar

These will be shown on the ingredients list.

- Raw, brown or cane sugar
- Invert sugar
- Dextrose
- Disaccharides
- Glucose
- Rapidura
- Honey
- Malt
- Fructose
- Sorbitol
- Agave nectar
- Coconut sugar
- Corn syrup
- Sucrose
- Malt extract
- Molasses
- Golden syrup
- Rice malt syrup

Learn to read labels and choose lower sugar options

Look for sugar on food labels and compare similar products.

Always look at the per 100g column as serving sizes will vary.

| NUTRITION INFORMATION | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Servings per package: 3 | | |
| Servings size: 150g | | |
| | Quantity per Serving | Quantity per 100g |
| Energy | 608 kJ | 405 kJ |
| Protein | 4.2 g | 2.8 g |
| Fat, Total | 7.4 g | 4.9 g |
| - saturated | 4.5 g | 3.0 g |
| Carbohydrate, total | 18.6 g | 12.4 g |
| - sugars | 18.6 g | 12.4 g |
| Sodium | 90 mg | 60 mg |
| Calcium | 300 mg (38%) | 200 mg |

* Percentage of recommended dietary intake

Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk, sugar, strawberries (9%), gelatine, culture, thickener (1442)

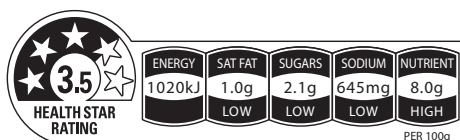
The label does not separate added sugars and natural sugars. Natural sugars from fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose) are acceptable sugars. If the product lists fruit in the ingredients list, a higher amount up to about 20g is okay.

Check the ingredients list - If added sugar is in the first three ingredients, this food may not be the best choice.

This food contains 12.4g sugars per 100g, making this an okay sugar food.

| Best | Okay | Poor |
|--------------|---------|---------------|
| Less than 5g | 5 - 15g | More than 15g |

Health Star Rating



Some packaging also includes the Health Star rating on the front of the packet.

- The more stars, the healthier the choice when compared to a similar food.
- It is useful to compare the same food types for example cheese against another type of cheese.
- It is not useful to compare different food types, for example cheese and cereal.

This health star rating indicates that the food contains 2.1g sugar per 100g. It is a low sugar product.

More information on food labels can be found at <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/how-understand-food-labels>.

Remember, the Health Star rating only applies to packaged foods. Don't forget fresh food (fruit, vegetables, nuts, lentils, fresh meat and fish) is usually the healthiest option.



Where can you go for more help?

What you eat is one of the most important treatments in managing diabetes and kidney disease. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes or kidney disease, you can find more information from:

An Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) for expert advice on nutrition and diet. Renal dietitians specialise in kidney health. To find one, visit <https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/> or call 1800 812 942.

For more information about healthy eating, refer to the Australian Dietary Guidelines at www.eatforhealth.gov.au.



Download a phone app to help you shop

If you have a smartphone you can download the free FoodSwitch app. It can help you find out what is in the food you're eating and suggest simple, healthier switches.

You can use your phone camera to scan the bar code on the packet. See more information here: <https://www.georgeinstitute.org/projects/foodswitch>.



Tips for eating less sugar

- Eat fresh foods like fruit, vegetables, legumes, and wholegrain bread and rice
- Use labels to choose lower sugar products and know hidden sources of sugar
- Try to use less sugar in drinks – reduce the amount of sugar you add to your tea or coffee
- Don't add to your breakfast cereal, oats or porridge – sweeten it using fresh or dried fruit
- Choose healthier snacks – go for fresh fruit or a small handful of unsalted nuts rather than a chocolate bar or biscuit
- Drink water as your main drink
- Limit high-sugar foods and drinks to small amounts as an occasional treat. These include lollies, chocolates, soft drinks, energy and sports drinks, fruit drinks, cordials as well as cakes, biscuits and ice creams. If you drink fruit juice, half fill a small glass and top with soda water
- If you eat a lot of sugar, start to cut down slowly. You may eventually find some foods too sweet.



Recipe ideas

- Dietitians Association of Australia Recipes <https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/smart-eating-for-you/smart-eating-recipes/>
- Kidney Health Australia resources: 'Back on the Menu: Recipes for a reduced potassium diet' and 'Dining In: delicious dialysis recipes and meals'. These recipes are suitable for all people, not just kidney consumers. Available to order from our online shop <https://www.kidney.org.au/shop>



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Sugar is a carbohydrate needed for energy, but too much sugar is not good for your health.
- Natural sugar that is in all fruit and plain milk products is okay.
- There are many different names for sugar. It is important to read the nutrition label and to look at the Health Star rating.

For more information about kidney or urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Helpline on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website **kidney.org.au** to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or Health Professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.



If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, contact the National Relay Service on **1800 555 677** or **relayservice.com.au**

For all types of services ask for 1800 454 363