

Eat Less Added Sugar

Americans should eat less sugar, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). For the first time, the organization has put a limit on the amount of added sugars that should be consumed:

Most women should consume no more than 100 calories of added sugars per day. Most men should consume no more than 150 calories each day.



That's about 6 teaspoons of added sugar a day for women and 9 for men. The average intake of added sugars for all Americans is 22.2 teaspoons per day (355 calories), according to a recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

Soft drinks and other sugar-sweetened beverages are the primary source of added sugars in Americans' diets.

"One 12-ounce soft drink contains about 130 calories and 8 teaspoons of sugar," said Rachel Johnson, PhD, associate provost and professor of nutrition at the University of Vermont in Burlington. Other frequently sugary foods include candy, cakes, cookies, and pies.



Added sugars are sugars and syrups added to foods during processing or preparation and sugars and syrups added at the table. Eating a lot of added sugars, as opposed to naturally occurring sugars (such as you would find in fruits), has contributed to the rise in obesity. It's also associated with increased risks for high blood pressure, high triglyceride (blood fat) levels, other risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

"Sugar has no nutritional value other than to provide calories," explains Johnson. "Consuming foods and beverages with excessive amounts of added sugars takes the place of more nutritious foods and beverages for many people."

To ensure that you're eating the proper amount of nutrients and limiting calories, be sure foods with a lot of added sugar are not taking the place of nutritious foods in your diet.

American Heart Association. Aug 24, 2009.



Try these suggestions to help you eat less sugar.

- Eat a pear, peach, apple, or other sweet fruit to satisfy a sugar craving.
- You might feel deprived if you don't eat a few sweets. Reserve high-calorie desserts for special occasions, and eat them in moderate amounts.
- Choose desserts that are better for you – such as frozen yogurt topped with fruits and nuts.
- Dentists recommend that if you eat sweets, eat them at meal time (not between meals) and brush afterwards.
- Buy whole-grain, unsweetened cereals for breakfast. If you want a sweeter taste, add berries, bananas, or raisins.

Sugar Has Many Names

Use all of these sugars sparingly. Read labels to watch for hidden sugars.

Sucrose (white cane sugar)	Fructose (fruit sugar)	Lactose (milk sugar)
Glucose (forms when carbohydrates are broken down)	Dextrose (corn sugar)	Maltose (malt sugar)
Invert sugar (a mix of glucose and fructose)	Evaporated cane juice	Brown sugar
Corn syrup	Honey	Turbinado sugar
Raw sugar	Barley malt syrup	Brown rice syrup
	Maple sugar	Molasses
	Beet sugar	Date sugar

To Feel Happier, Exercise

Exercise strengthens your body, heart, and lungs. It also boosts your mood. New research by the University of Vermont shows that moderate exercise, such as walking or riding a

stationary bicycle, has a significant improvement on your frame of mind. Researchers discovered that exercise improved mood immediately after exercise and that the positive effect remained for up to 12 hours.

Even if you aren't used to exercise, when you start there are immediate benefits to your mood and how you feel.

The amount of exercise needed to get a mental health boost is fairly easy. Just 20-30 minutes of moderate activities (e.g., walking, gardening, biking, and social dancing) is adequate to help people feel better, when done regularly. The new Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that all adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. This equates to a half an hour, 5 days or more each week.

If you want to feel happy and energetic, get at least 20-30 minutes of regular physical activity every day. It's good for your body and your mind.

American College of Sports Medicine Newsletter. Sept 2009.

A Healthy Weight Could Help Prevent Alzheimer's

More than 300 million people worldwide are obese, and a billion more are overweight, according to the World Health Organization. With obesity comes an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. Memory loss can now be added to the list.

Researchers compared the brains of elderly people who were obese, overweight, and of healthy weight to see if their brains looked equally healthy. They found that obese individuals had brains that looked 16 years older than the brains of people who were at a healthy weight. Obese people also had, on average, 8% less brain tissue. Overweight people had brains that looked 8 years older than the brains of healthy-weighted people and had 4% less tissue.

“That’s a big loss of tissue, and it depletes your cognitive reserves, putting you at much greater risk of Alzheimer’s

and other diseases that attack the brain,” says Paul Thompson, a UCLA professor of neurology.

Researchers found that the obese people had lost brain tissue in areas that are critical for planning and memory, attention and decision-making functions, long-term memory, and movement.

“We have linked obesity to shrinkage of brain areas that are also targeted by Alzheimer’s,” says Cyrus Raji, lead author of the study and a medical student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. “But that could mean exercising, eating right, and keeping weight under control can maintain brain health with aging and potentially lower the risk for Alzheimer’s and other types of dementia.”

UCLA. Aug 2009.



Kids Off to College: What Now?

Much has been written about jittery freshmen trying to cope with the uncertainty of starting college as they say goodbye to their parents.

But what about those parents who suddenly have an empty nest?

Whether you’re a single parent or part of a married couple, the adjustment can be a difficult one. Many parents report experiencing separation anxiety and feeling a sense of loss. Counselors such as John DiMino, director of Temple University’s Tuttleman Counseling Services, warn against making radical changes. “Don’t convert your child’s room into a pool room the minute the kid gets on the train,” he cautions. Instead, view your child’s college years “as a time to start taking care of your needs again.”

Once your child is off to college, try to:

▶ **Rediscover your dreams.** Maybe there’s something you placed on the back burner while raising your children that you can refocus on.

- ▶ **Be best friends.** You and your spouse can build togetherness and emotional intimacy when you communicate your thoughts, feelings, and dreams.
 - ▶ **Be realistic.** Life is not continual idyllic bliss. There can be stresses, disagreements, and major disappointments. Confront and master them – with your spouse if you are married.
 - ▶ **Find a passion.** Find something that you feel strongly about – for example, a charity, a cause, a hobby, or a belief system. If you’re part of a couple, find something that you both feel strongly about and can work on together.
 - ▶ **Laugh.** Good-intentioned humor draws people closer, breaks down barriers, and reduces stress. Find out what makes you and your spouse laugh, and nurture it.
 - ▶ **Revive romance.** Remember when you were first together? Try reenacting some of the romantic scenarios from yesteryear. Put your favorite old LPs on the turntable and dance!
- Seek help if being an empty-nester is causing you emotional problems.

American Psychological Association. 2009.

Send a College Care Package

Healthy snacks. Send raisins, trail mix, and whole-grain crackers.

Vitamins. Give your student a steady supply of vitamin Cs and multi-vitamins.

Quarters. Make sure your student has enough quarters to do laundry and you’ll prevent bags of dirty clothes from coming home on break (maybe).

Photos. Yes, you can post them on the web. But there’s something satisfying about photos of family (and pets!) that can be pinned up on the wall.

Just for Fun. Send Sudoku puzzles, music CDs, fuzzy slippers, and tea bags.

Cards. Be sure to tuck a personal note or card inside every package.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: How do I deal with stress at home and at the office?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-stress.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: well@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: “Build Strong Bones” available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-strongbones.pdf. Osteoporosis is often referred to as the “silent epidemic” because in most cases, a fracture is the first sign that you have it. Do what you can to protect and strengthen your bones now, including getting the right kind of exercise and eating the right kinds of foods.