

Sugar & your smile

Watch your sugar intake

You've heard it ever since you were a kid: sugar's bad for your teeth. But telling an Australian not to eat sugar is like telling a koala not to eat gum leaves.

Though we may never give up sugar altogether, we can at least control our intake by knowing how much sugar is contained in the different food and drink we consume.

You should also watch your intake of sugar and starch combinations-such as biscuits, cakes and fast foods. Sugar/starch combinations are more cariogenic than sugars alone.

The following list shows the approximate amounts of sugar added to some common types of food and drink. And, bear in mind, natural sugar is often already present in the ingredients.

You'll be surprised just how much "added sugar" there is in your life ...

Food/drink	Serving	Teaspoons sugar	Tinned fruit	200 g	6	Fruit yoghurt	200 g	3.5	Breakfast cereals			
teaspoon	1	Honey	1 teaspoon	1.5		Shortbread or tea biscuits	1	0.5	Chocolate coated biscuits	1	1	
gram slice	4	Rice pudding	200 g	4		Ice cream	100 ml/1 scoop	2	Drinking chocolate (powder)	3	teaspoons	
grapefruit juice (sweetened)	250 ml	0.5	Bottled orange juice (sweetened)	250 ml	1		Bottled blackcurrant juice	drinking				
Cordial (diluted)	250 ml	3	Sports drink	250 ml	4.5		Lemonade	250 ml	3	Cola	250 ml	5.5
teaspoons	0.5	Mayonnaise	2 teaspoons	0.25			Chocolate/confectionery	125 g bar	6 to 20	Liquorice	allsorts	
Fruit pastilles	35 g pack	7	Mints	35 g pack	7.5		Toffees	125 g pack	20	Chewing gum	1 stick/piece	1

Read the label

The following sweeteners are equivalent to or greater than sugar. All can cause decay.

- Brown sugar
- Corn syrup
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Glucose
- Golden syrup
- Honey
- Maltose
- Sucrose
- Treacle

When you buy a food or drink product, look for "unsweetened" or "artificially sweetened" alternatives. The following artificial sweeteners do not cause decay. However, some are suspected to cause other health problems. You may like to investigate the issues before reaching for the artificial sweetener.

- Acesulfame
- Aspartame
- Cyclamate
- Isomalt
- Lycasin
- Nutrasweet
- Saccharin
- Sorbitol
- Thaumatin

See also ...

- Personal dental hygiene plan
- Avoiding acid erosion
- Pregnancy
- Kids & babies

