



Decoding Food Labels: Uncover Hidden Sugars

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Are you ready to take control of your sugar intake and boost your health?

In the UK, adults are consuming too much free sugar. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) recommends that free sugars make up no more than 5% of total daily energy intake—around 30g for the average adult. However, according to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, the actual intake among adults is almost double this recommendation, contributing to increased health risks such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and tooth decay.

This quick-start guide will equip you with the know-how to uncover hidden sugar in your favourite foods by deciphering food labels.

Master the skill of decoding hidden sugar to make healthier choices and savour a balanced, low-sugar diet.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey>



#1

Recognize Common Names For Sugar

Begin by familiarizing yourself with the different types of sugar commonly found in food, such as sucrose, fructose, glucose, dextrose, and maltose.

Each sugar type serves a specific purpose in food processing, and some may be more harmful than others. Knowing these sugar types, you can better identify them on food labels.





Master The Nutrition Facts Panel

Locate the Nutrition Facts panel on the food packaging, and examine the "Total Sugars" section, which encompasses natural and added sugars.

That will give you an estimate of the product's overall sugar content.





Spot The "Added Sugars" Line

Search for the "Added Sugars" line under "Total Sugars" on the Nutrition Facts panel.

That helps you distinguish between naturally occurring sugars and those added during processing.

Remember that natural sugars in fruits and vegetables come with additional beneficial nutrients like fibre, while added sugars offer empty calories without nutritional value.





Inspect The Ingredient List

Read the ingredient list to detect any sugars mentioned under alternative names, such as high fructose corn syrup, cane sugar, and malt syrup.

Ingredients get listed in descending order of weight, so the higher a "sugar" appears, the more the product contains.

By applying your knowledge of sugar types from Step 1, you can estimate the sugar content and make healthier decisions.





Compare Products

Assess the sugar content of similar products by scrutinizing their Nutrition Facts panels and ingredient lists.

Opt for the choice with less added sugar or fewer sugar-containing ingredients.

For instance, granola bars, flavoured yogurts, and pasta sauces often have added sugars, so seek out brands that provide low-sugar alternatives.





Comprehend Serving Sizes

Take note of the serving sizes presented on the Nutrition Facts panel.

Occasionally, a product may seem low in sugar, but the serving size is much smaller than you'd typically consume. Be mindful of portion sizes and adjust as needed.





Ignore Front-of-package Claims

Food manufacturers often employ front-of-package claims like "all-natural," "low-fat," or "heart-healthy" to entice consumers. However, these claims can be deceptive, and it's crucial to thoroughly review the ingredient list and Nutrition Facts panel for a more accurate representation of the product's healthfulness. Exercise caution with products that make exaggerated or unsupported claims, and use your judgement to determine if a product aligns with your health goals.



Kudos for taking the first step toward comprehending food labels and uncovering hidden sugar!

By adhering to this quick-start guide, you'll be well-prepared to make informed food choices and enhance your health.

Remember, knowledge is power, and with this newfound insight, you can embrace a healthier, low-sugar lifestyle.

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