

Sugar

There is no debate that sugar is harmful to health. Not only is it empty calories with no nutritional benefit, but sugar promotes overeating and a lack of appreciation for the taste of natural foods. Sugar comes in many forms so it's important to be able to distinguish the harmful from the slightly less problematic options.

Tips to Minimize Sugar

- ▶ Avoid products where sugar is listed among one of the first few ingredients.
- ▶ Avoid simple sugars that rapidly raise blood sugar, especially those found in processed, packaged foods. (Ex: white rice, white bread, white pasta, packaged or baked goods, convenience foods).
- ▶ More acceptable sweeteners come from natural sources, such as fruit and honey. While they have a lesser impact on blood sugar, they are still sugars and their intake should be minimized.
- ▶ Pairing sugar with plant-based protein or fat minimizes the spike in blood sugar. Pair almond butter with a banana or apple or add a handful of nuts to a date to create a more balanced food.
- ▶ Artificial sweeteners should be avoided as there are concerns about their safety, including impact on immune health (ex: allergic reactions).

BETTER SWEETENERS

- Honey
- Fruit, esp. berries
- Maple syrup
- Yacon syrup
- Monk fruit
- Coconut sugar
- Lucuma powder
- Stevia (must be labeled as organic stevia leaf)

SWEETENERS TO AVOID

- Sucrose (table sugar)
- Fructose
- High fructose corn syrup
- Glucose
- Maltose
- Lactose
- Cane sugar
- Malt syrup
- Maltodextrin

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

- Equal
- NutraSweet
- Sweet 'N Low
- Splenda
- Truvia