



Did you know that the American Heart Association recommends that children between 2 and 18 years of age should consume no more than 6 teaspoons of sugar per day? Yet the average American kid consumes more than 20 teaspoons of sugar daily! This is because sugar is in practically everything we consume – even in the foods that don’t necessarily taste sweet like pasta sauce and crackers.

There have been several studies conducted on mice on the many effects of sugar. One such study was recently carried out at the University of Utah where an experiment was carried out using two groups of mice. One group of mice was given 25% more sugar. The result was that the group of mice that were given more sugar were twice as likely to die. Sugar causes serious damage to our organs and our brain’s ability to function including our memory and ability to focus and learn.

The first step towards saving yourself from this sweet toxic is being aware of how much sugar there is in the food item you are consuming. Sugar is measured in grams in food products - 1 gram of white sugar is equal to 4 teaspoons of sugar. So for example, a 12 oz can of Coke has 39 grams of sugar, which are 9 and ¾ teaspoons of sugar.

Some other examples of food items with sugar include:

Food	Grams of Sugar	Teaspoons of Sugar (g/4)
Starbucks Tall Mocha Frappuccino (12 oz)	42g	10 ½ tsp
Nesquik Chocolate Milk 8 oz (240 ml) Serving	29g	7 ¼ tsp
Starbucks Chocolate Chip Cookie	27g	6 ¾ tsp
Starbucks Hot Chocolate with Whipped Cream (Kids size – 8 oz)	24g	6 tsp
Kit Kat (1 pack)	22g	5 ½ tsp
Tropicana juice box (236 ml)	22g	5 ½ tsp
Neilson 2% (1 cup) milk	12g	3 tsp
Baskin Robbins Chocolate Ice Cream (kids scoop)	11g	2 ¾ tsp
Kellogg’s Froot Loops Cereal (1 cup)	10g	2 ½ tsp
Push Pop	9g	2 ¼ tsp
Fruit Rollups (1 pack)	7g	1 ¾ tsp

Here are some tips to be sugar smart:

- Always check the label. Sugar is disguised under different names. For example, ingredients that end in *ose* such as sucrose and fructose are sugars. Ingredients that have the word *syrup* are also sugars.
- Choose fresh fruits instead of sugars to add to cereals, yogurts, smoothies and salads
- Prepare your own meals and desserts so that you can control how much sugar is in it.
- Beware of healthy sounding statements such as “fat free” “25% less sugar”, “excellent source of calcium”, etc. These statements don’t mean that there isn’t loads of sugar in the products.
- Always ask yourself, “do I really need sugar in what I am eating?”and “how much do I really need?”.

By Nectarine
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