

February challenge: Sugar, Not so Sweet

The average American consumes too much sugar. Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that on average, females consume 106 grams (26 teaspoons) of sugar every day, and males consume 135 grams (33 teaspoons). These amounts contain both added and natural sugar (found in fruit and dairy), and are about 4 times higher than health experts recommend. Too much sugar is linked to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This is why the American Heart Association recommends no more than:

- 6 teaspoons (about 24 grams, or 100 calories) of added sugar a day for women
- 9 teaspoons (about 36 grams, or 150 calories) of added sugar a day for men

Too much sugar and artificial sweetener (which can be as much as 13,000 times sweeter than sugar) can train your taste buds to become used to a high level of sweetness. This can cause you to crave—and consume—more sugar. It can make you feel hungry, too.

The good news is you can reset your taste buds to consume less—or no—added sugar.

Source: Kaiser Permanente

The Challenge:

This month, cut out all added sugars and artificial sweeteners.

1. Don't add sugar or artificial sweetener to any food or drinks (see list below).
2. Avoid all sugar or artificially sweetened drinks including sodas, bottled teas, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks and juice (even 100% juice), specialty coffee drinks.
3. Cut out any foods that have a lot of added sugar or artificial sweetener such as cookies, cake, candy, yogurt, soy or almond milk, breakfast cereals, or energy bars.
4. Limit dried fruits to 2 servings per day. Plain unsweetened milk, yogurt, and fresh fruit contain natural sugar, which is fine.
5. Read food and drink labels. Aim for foods with 5 grams or less of added sugar in the items you consume. Look at the ingredient list for other names for sugar and artificial sweeteners such as:

List of sugars on next page...

If you have met the above challenge and cut out all added sugars and artificial sweeteners for most days in February, please complete below and turn in to your Eat Well, Work Well site coordinator by February 28th.

I (print name) _____ attest that I successfully cut out all added sugars and artificial sweeteners for most days this month of February.

Signature: _____

See next page for list of sugars...

Sugar

- Sucrose
- Honey
- High fructose corn syrup
- Corn syrup
- Maple syrup
- Molasses
- Agave
- Evaporated cane juice
- Coconut palm sugar
- Dextrose
- Barley malt
- Cane sugar
- Grape sugar
- Turbinado sugar
- Raw sugar
- Powdered sugar
- Brown sugar
- Brown rice syrup
- Date sugar

Artificial sweeteners

- Sweet and Low
- Equal
- Splenda
- Monk Fruit
- Neotame
- Stevia

What can you eat instead?"

Real food. Check out these sample menus:

- Breakfast: Oatmeal with unsweetened almond milk with walnuts and blueberries
- Lunch: Lentil soup, salad (veggies dressed with a little oil and vinegar), and strawberries
- Dinner: Salmon or beans with vegetables, quinoa, and a banana

What should you drink?

Sparkling mineral water, unsweetened teas, or essence waters. You can also infuse water with your favorite flavors at home by adding lemon, mint, or other herbs and fruits to water.

Source: Kaiser Permanente