The Dangers of Hidden Sugar

In the UK, we consume over two million tonnes of sugar every year. Yet we often don’t know we’re eating it. Most of us are aware that sweet stuff should be eaten in moderation. But some food and drinks contain a surprising amount of sugar, which means you could be consuming far much more than you should.

If we consume more sugar than we need, our liver converts the excess into fat. Some of this fat is stored around the body. This is why repeatedly eating too much sugar can lead to weight gain and even obesity, leading to an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease and liver disease.

Tooth decay is also more likely, as bacteria in our mouths feast on the sugary foods we eat and produce acids that dissolve our tooth enamel.

Spotting high-sugar foods

The total amount of sugar a product contains can be found on its nutritional label. Working out how much sugar is in your food or drink can be confusing, as it appears in many different guises, such as sucrose, glucose, fructose and honey.

Food manufacturers are not required by law to separate added sugars from naturally occurring sugars on a nutrition label, but you can find out how much total sugar is in a product by looking for the ‘carbohydrates (of which sugars)’ figure. More than 15g of total sugars per 100g means it has a high sugar content, 5g of total sugars or less per 100g means it has low sugar content.

Sugar traps

12 Foods That Have the Most Hidden Sugar *

1. Condiments: Ketchup, barbecue sauce, mayonnaise, steak sauces, salad dressing and even mustard all contain sugar. Some styles of BBQ sauce contain 13 grams of sugar (approximately 3 teaspoons) for every two tablespoons of condiment.

2. Yogurt: This is one of those “I thought it was healthy!” foods. An 8 ounce serving of the average fruit variety non-fat yogurt contains a staggering 47 grams of sugar (11 teaspoons)

3. Pasta Sauce: Using a ready-made sauce in your pasta dish can add up to 30 grams of sugar (7.5 teaspoons). Low-fat sauces are often high in added sugar to help disguise the bland taste.

4. Dried Fruit: Unlike pasta sauce, we expect dried fruit to be sweet. Just ⅛ of a cup can have 24 grams of sugar (8 teaspoons) and it’s not all naturally occurring:

5. Granola Bars: Have 12 grams (4 teaspoons) of sugar, and sometimes much more, hiding in most conventional brands.
6. **Bread**: A slice of bread contains around 2 grams of sugar per slice (nearly a teaspoon).

7. **Boxed Cereal**: We all know sugar is in sugar coated breakfast cereal but did you know how much is in perceived “healthy” cereals. Raisin Bran (20 grams, or 5 teaspoons), Kellogg’s Smart Start (14 grams, or 3.5 teaspoons) and Kashi GoLean Crunch (13 grams, or 3-plus teaspoons).

8. **Peanut Butter**: Whether you prefer chunky or creamy, if you’re eating any of the popular peanut butter brands, there are 3 grams (a teaspoon) in each 2 tablespoon serving.

9. **Deli Meat**: Most deli meats are infused with corn syrup and/or aspartame (an artificial sugar).

10. **Tomato Soup**: Sugar is added to tomato soup to help balance out the acidity of the tomatoes. One medium carton can contain up to 30 grams of sugar (10 teaspoons).

11. **Chicken Curry**: Although they taste savoury, supermarket curry dishes typically have sugary sauces. Ready-meals and takeaways can contain up to 15 grams (nearly 4 teaspoons) of sugar per meal.

12. **Cheese Pizza**: A cheese pizza can contain more than 30 grams of sugar, (7.5 teaspoons). It’s used in the dough to react with yeast to make it rise – and to sweeten the sauce.

**AND DRINKS also have deceptive amounts of sugar in them**

- **Water**: no sugar the very best thing for us – but remember flavoured water is full of sugar

- **Fruit Shoot**: 2.2g or nearly a teaspoon

- **Red wine**: 3-6g or between 1 -2 teaspoons

- **Red Bull**: 27g that’s 9 teaspoons

- **Can of Coca Cola**: 35g or nearly 12 teaspoons

- **Lucozade**: 43g or 14.33 teaspoons

- **Starbucks Hot Chocolate**: 43g or 14.33 teaspoons

- **Frijj Chocolate Milk**: 44g – we all think of milk as a healthy drink but this has whopping 14.66 teaspoons per bottle

Guidelines suggest sugar should make up less than 10% of the calories we eat. Which for women is the equivalent of 12.5 teaspoons a day and for men the equivalent of 17 teaspoons of sugar per day.

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