

Taming Your Sweet Tooth

Do you crave sugar? Sugar is hidden in many common foods, and the more you consume, the more sugar you want to have.

By eating or drinking highly sweetened products, you become desensitized to sweetness in your foods, so it takes more sugar, or more intense sweetness, to satisfy your desire.

The Dietary Guidelines for American recommend getting no more than 10 percent of your daily calories from sugar, or roughly 50 grams. To put things into perspective, drinking more than one 12-ounce can of soda would max out your limit for a day. The American Heart Association recommends about half that amount.

The reason for these limits is that studies show a diet with a lot of sugar increases your risk for developing heart disease, and it can lead to obesity and associated diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cancer. This limit applies specifically to added sugars and not those occurring naturally in foods like fruits and milk.

It is not always easy to find the added sugars in foods and beverages. The best place to look is the ingredient label on processed foods. Look for these names: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, malt sugar, raw sugar, honey, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit juice concentrates, molasses, sugar, syrup, and sugar molecules ending in “ose” (dextrose, glucose, sucrose, etc.)