



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



## Toolbox Talks

### Too Much Sugar Isn't So Sweet for Your Health

Many people consume more sugar than they realize. It's important to be aware of how much sugar you consume because our bodies don't need sugar to function properly. Added sugars contribute zero nutrients but many added calories that can lead to extra pounds or even obesity, thereby reducing heart health.

There are two types of sugars in American diets: naturally occurring sugars and added sugars.

1. **Naturally occurring sugars** are found naturally in foods such as fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose).
2. **Added sugars** include any sugars or caloric sweeteners that are added to foods or beverages during processing or preparation (such as putting sugar in your coffee or adding sugar to your cereal). Added sugars (or added sweeteners) can include natural sugars such as white sugar, brown sugar and honey as well as other caloric sweeteners that are chemically manufactured (such as high fructose corn syrup).

### How much is just right?

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends limiting the amount of added sugars you consume to no more than half of your daily discretionary calories allowance. For most American women, that's no more than 100 calories per day, or about 6 teaspoons of sugar. For men, it's 150 calories per day, or about 9 teaspoons. There are four calories in one gram of sugar, so if a product has 15 grams of sugar per serving, that's 60 calories just from the sugar alone. For reference, a typical 12-ounce can of regular soda has 130 calories and 8 teaspoons of sugar. Think of your daily energy need as a budget. You'd organize a real budget with "essentials" (things like rent and utilities) and "extras" (such as vacation and entertainment). In a daily calorie budget, the essentials are the minimum number of calories you need to meet your nutrient needs.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What are ways to replace sugar in my diet?

Try replacing traditional desserts with fruit, look for juices with 100% fruit, and try to cut back on adding sugar to things like coffee and tea.

### Discussion Questions:

- Do you know how to look on nutrition labels for added sugar?
- What is one way you feel that you can cut back on sugar?