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Added Sugars vs. Natural Sugars

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Enjoy the Natural Sweetness of Watermelon All Season Long!

As the holiday season approaches, so does the abundance of sweets. While you don't have to give up your favorite holiday treats, you may consider exploring ways to limit added sugars and opt for more nutritious and naturally sweet foods, like watermelon!

What are added sugars?

Added sugars are not naturally found in food. Instead, they are added to foods for many reasons, such as to increase sweetness or shelf life. Added sugars include both the sugars you add to your food and the sugars and syrups that food manufacturers add to products like sodas, cookies, yogurts, cereals, and candies. While they may satisfy our sweet tooth, eating and drinking too many foods and beverages with added sugars can cause us to take in too many calories and not enough of the essential nutrients that we need for health.[\[1\]](#)

Recently, the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Advisory Committee released their scientific report with a new limit on added sugars. They recommend limiting added sugar to no more than 6% of total daily calories, down from 10%.[\[2\]](#) That is only 120 calories, or about 7 teaspoons, for a 2,000-calorie diet. According to the 2012 What We Eat in America, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the average American consumes 18 teaspoons of added sugars from foods and beverages each day.[\[3\]](#) That is nearly two and a half times the newly recommended limit.

How can I cut down on added sugars?

You do not have to give up on all foods that contain sugar. Instead, you can limit foods and beverages that contain added sugars by making some smart and sustainable changes to your diet. For example, try checking the ingredients in your foods for added sugar, or start by replacing foods and drinks high in added sugars with those that contain natural sugars, such as 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Foods like fruits, vegetables, and milk contain sugars naturally. The sugars in these foods provide us with energy and the essential nutrients we need! Watermelon is nutrient-dense, providing fiber (4% DV), and antioxidant-rich phytonutrient lycopene (12.7mg/serving). It is an excellent source of Vitamin C, and it provides vitamin A (8% DV), vitamin B6 (6% DV) and potassium (6% DV).[\[4\]](#),[\[5\]](#) Watermelon is a nutritious, naturally sweet addition to your diet!

Enjoy Naturally Sweetened Recipes Featuring Watermelon!

To decrease added sugars, incorporate naturally sweet watermelon into your holiday menus with these fresh and flavorful recipes!

- [Watermelon Cranberry Sauce](#) Give thanks with a side of watermelon cranberry sauce. Not only does this provide a fun twist on an old favorite, it also replaces added sugars with tasty natural sugars. Surprise your guests by adding watermelon to this sweet and saucy dish at your next holiday party!
- [Watermelon and Chocolate Dessert Board](#) Still trying to find the perfect party platter? Let guests graze around this equally beautiful and delicious dessert board that perfectly packs together a sweet and salty combo.
- [Breakfast Banana Split](#) The kids love it and the guests love it, making it a breakfast favorite

for all. This naturally sweet recipe is a great way to get your day started and leave your taste buds happy!

[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans [Internet]. 8th ed. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/>

[2] Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. 2020. Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: advisory Report to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, Washington, DC.

[3] Bowman, SA. Added sugars: Definition and estimation in the USDA Food Patterns Equivalents Databases. *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*, 2017;64(1):64-67.

[4] USDA Food Composition Database. <https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list?home=true>
Accessed March 25, 2019.

[5] Naz A, Butt MS, Sultan MT, Qayyum MM, Niaz RS. Watermelon lycopene and allied health claims. *EXCLI J*, 2014;13:650-60.

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