



Where is sugar found?

Different types of sugar can be found naturally in foods like honey, maple syrup and agave nectar. Some people believe that the nutritional value of these sugars is superior to white and brown sugar, which is extracted from a plant called sugar cane. Although there are some very slight nutritional differences between different sugars it is important to get the majority of your sugar intake from raw whole fruit and milk because these foods offer other nutrients to our bodies, such as vitamins and fibre.

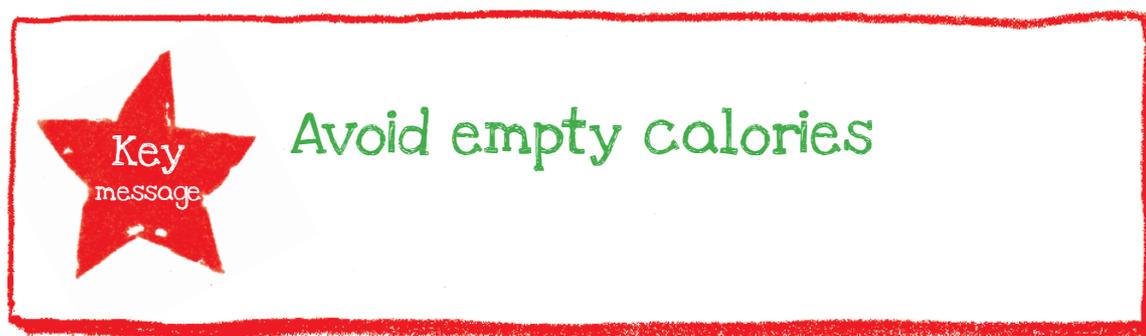
Sugar is added to all sorts of foods to make them taste sweet or to preserve flavour. It is not just found in the foods you might expect such as cakes, biscuits, fizzy drinks and desserts, but is often hidden in foods like ketchup, bread and cereal. Check the ingredients list on the food label (see page 18) so you know how much sugar is in the food you eat.

Why is too much sugar bad for you?

Too much added sugar is bad for your health because it can lead to tooth decay and it provides your body with lots of empty calories (see page 6). Empty calories give us lots of energy without any nutrients, and as a result we eat more and more without feeling full or satisfied. This leads to an increased risk of weight gain and a cycle of highs and lows in your energy levels, which will leave you feeling tired and craving even more sugar.

What about artificial sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners do not add calories to foods, but we aren't sure how they affect our health in the long term. They are found in lots of things such as cakes, biscuits, tinned foods, jams and fizzy drinks. Always check food labels and avoid eating them, where possible





Lesson plan for teachers

Nutrition lesson 4: Sugar



Learning intentions

- ★ To understand the different types of sugar and where they can be found
- ★ To learn why too much sugar is bad for our health

Key messages

- ★ Different types of sugar can be found naturally in foods, such as milk and fruit
- ★ Sugar is added to food to make it sweet or to preserve flavour
- ★ Too much added sugar is bad for our health because it can lead to tooth decay and provides our bodies with lots of empty calories
- ★ Avoid artificial sweeteners where possible
- ★ Avoid empty calories

Before the lesson

- ★ Read through the message in full (see **Nutritional messaging for children**, page 15)
- ★ Print one copy of the nutrition graphic per pupil
- ★ Bring in a selection of different types of sugar, such as agave nectar, honey, maple syrup, white sugar, muscavado sugar, icing sugar, brown sugar, golden syrup etc.

Running order

- 1 Welcome children to the classroom
- 2 Introduce learning intentions
- 3 Show the different types of sugars and discuss where sugar is found and why we use it
- 4 Get the children to taste a small sample of the different types of sugar and discuss the difference in flavour and texture
- 5 Explain that sugar is empty calories, regardless of its form
- 6 Explain to the children that sugar can be hidden in places we don't expect and give examples
- 7 Share why too much sugar can be bad for our health
- 8 Explain that natural sugars from fruit and milk can be enjoyed more often because these offer other nutrients to our bodies, such as vitamins and fibre
- 9 Briefly touch on artificial sweeteners and explain that they should be avoided
- 10 Recap the key messages at the end of the lesson, answering any extra questions the children may have

Plenary

Hidden sugar investigators:

One sugar lump equals four grams of sugar. Create a pictogram depicting the sugar content in five different foods where you might not expect to find it

Here are some common types of natural sweeteners, for reference:

- ★ **Honey** is made by bees, using nectar from flowers to create a sweet substance. It can have different flavours or colours depending on the type of flowers that the bees visit, and can range from solid honeycomb to runny honey.
- ★ **Agave nectar** is a sweetener made from the agave plant. It is mainly grown in Mexico and South America, and the nectar is sweeter and even more runny than honey.
- ★ **Maple Syrup** is a sweet syrup distilled from the sap of a maple tree. Traditionally, it comes from North America and is often eaten with breakfast foods, such as pancakes, waffles or porridge
- ★ **White** and **brown sugar** are both extracted from a plant called sugar cane. The shape, size and colour of the granules depends on the amount of processing or refining it goes through