

THE  
Sugar  
*solution*





It's hardly breaking news that we eat too much sugar. I know that you know, that eating sugar isn't doing you any favours. A sugar habit could well be the reason you're not losing weight, you experience cravings, and your energy levels are on the floor.

## I'M NOT TELLING YOU THIS TO SCARE YOU. THINK OF IT AS A WAKE-UP CALL.

The white stuff is everywhere! It goes without saying that you'll find it in sweets, cakes and cookies. However, you'll also find it creeping into practically every type of processed foods (which is why you don't realise you're eating so much) - even some of the least likely. Why is sugar added to flavoured crisps?

But cutting it out (or even cutting down) can feel hard - especially if you have spent years using sugary treats to give you enough energy to get through the day or as a reward for something you achieved.

In this reference guide, I'll give you the lowdown on where to look to cut added sugar from your diet as well as plenty of inspiration for alternative breakfasts and snacks - often where the sugary products can sneak in.

# SUGAR ADDICTION IS REAL

Sugar triggers the brain's pleasure and reward centres - areas in the emotional centres of the brain responsible for the release of the "feel good" neurotransmitter called dopamine. The same brain areas are stimulated by cocaine, nicotine, opiates like heroin and morphine, and alcohol.

In fact, in 2018, a study at Connecticut College found that Oreo cookies were just as addictive as cocaine for lab rats.

If you're used to eating a lot of sugar, you might find the first few days of going sugar-free tough - don't let that be what stops you trying. It's not uncommon to experience low levels of energy, low mood, or to feel shaky.

Adopt tactics such as distraction, delay, and distance between you and the sugar. Use sugar-free fluids between meals to help keep you feeling full, though don't just switch to feeding a caffeine addiction!

Persevere.

It will be worth it.



# DITCH SUGARY BREAKFASTS

When you start the day with a bowl of cereal, in pretty much every case, you're starting with a bowl of sugar. Even those cereals we supposed should be 'good for you' featuring bran and fibre are full of sugar. Breakfast cereals commonly aimed at children have the equivalent sugar content of two and a half chocolate biscuits.

Cereals highest in sugar (per 30g serving\*)

Aldi's Harvest Morn Choco Rice 12g

Kellogg's Frosties 11g

Kellogg's Crunchy Nut 11g

Morrisons Honey & Nut Corn Flakes 10.9g

Sainsbury's Honey Nut Corn Flakes 10.9g

Kellogg's Coco Pops 10.5g

Sainsbury's Choco Rice Pops 10.5g

The Co-operative Choco Rice Crispies 10.5g

Essential Waitrose Choco Pops 10.5g

Lidl Crownfield Choco Rice 10.5g

## SOME YOU THOUGHT WERE HEALTHY

Alpen Original Muesli (6.9g)

Nestlé Cheerios (6.2g)

Kellogg's All-Bran Bran Flakes (6g)

Dorset Cereals Simply Delicious Muesli  
(5.1g) Kellogg's Special K (5.1g)

Nestlé Shreddies (4.5g)

\*The 30g serving is a myth, too. Even children would eat more.





## BREAKFAST SWAPS

Boiled egg with wholemeal toast soldiers

Scrambled or poached egg on wholemeal toast (optional addition of avocado, rocket leaves, tomatoes or mushrooms - also a healthy lunch)

Wholemeal toast with unsweetened nut butter & chopped strawberries

Overnight oats (soaking them can make them more digestible)

Porridge with berries or stewed apple, topped with nuts, seeds & cinnamon

Greek yoghurt and berries

Banana pancakes, topped with flaked almonds and natural yoghurt

Omelettes or muffin frittata

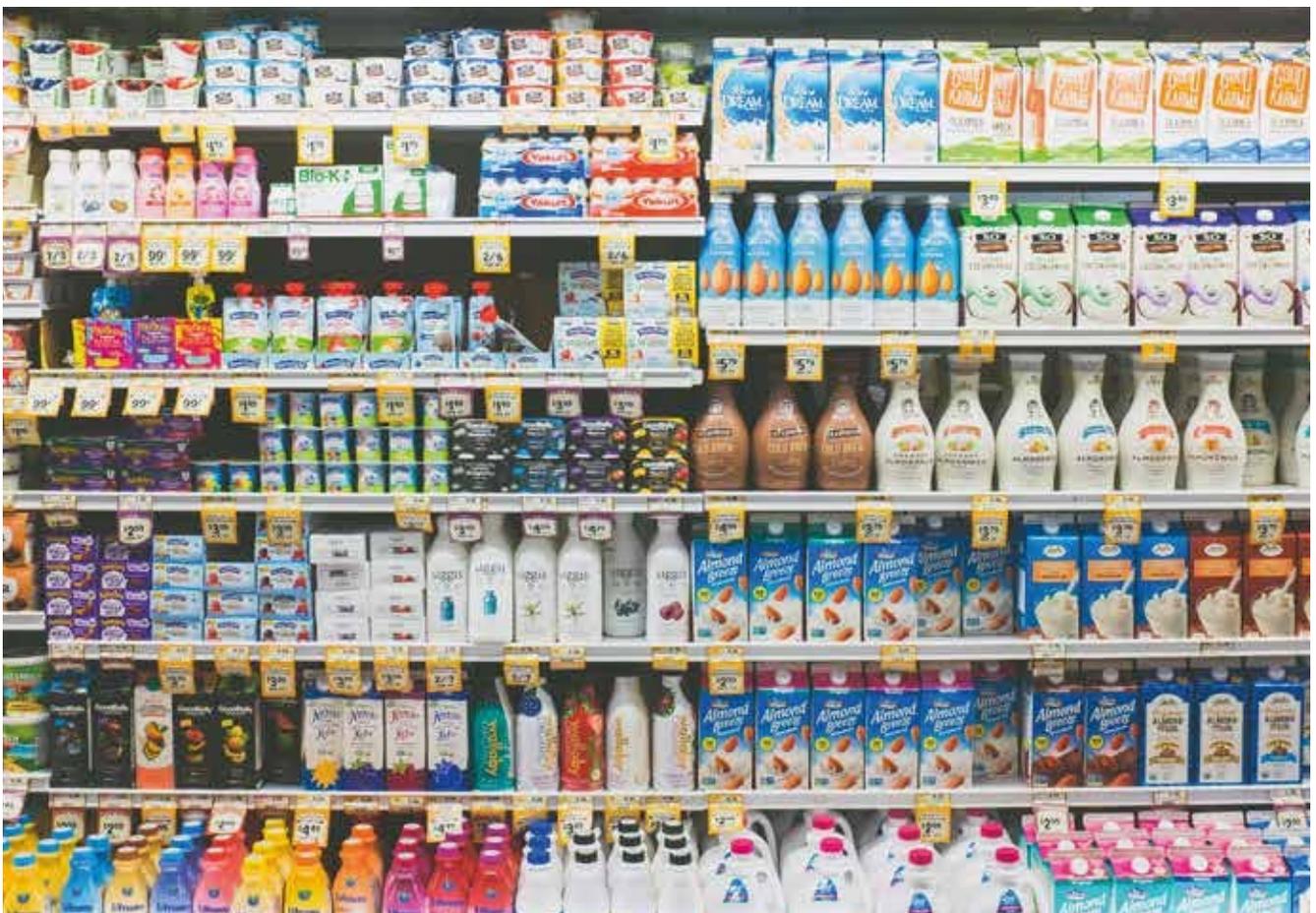
Protein smoothie (add cocoa powder to make it chocolatey)

# DOUBLE CHECK FOOD LABELS

“Sugar free” or “no added sugar” often doesn’t mean it has no sugar, but maybe the sugar is disguised as something else. This is code for ‘we found another way to make it sweet.’

Concentrated fruit juice of any kind is often used in snacks for toddlers, and it’s concentrated to such an extent that all that remains is the sugar. In fact, sugar has over 50 different aliases. Here are just a few: sucrose, fructose, glucose, dextrose, galactose, lactose, maltose, invert sugar, raw sugar, confectioner's sugar, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, isoglucose, brown rice syrup, barley malt and malodextrin.

Even those supposed healthy alternatives such as agave nectar, coconut sugar and honey are nothing more than sugar dressed up as a healthy alternative. In fact, they might be even worse for you than sugar, containing high levels of fructose, which places additional strain on the liver.



# WATCH JUICES & SMOOTHIES

It's easy to think that these are healthy options, but one glass of orange juice can contain the equivalent of 5 teaspoons of sugar and none of the fibre to slow its progress into your bloodstream. Fruit-laden smoothies do just the same, so add a source of protein to reduce that blood sugar spike - nut butter, yoghurt, seeds...

## SIMPLE SNACKS

Cut up apple or pear with unsweetened almond butter

Oatcakes with smoked salmon, mackerel pate or houmous.

Small pot of natural yoghurt with pureed fruit (berries, apple, pear, plum)

A handful of mixed nuts and seeds

Hard-boiled egg and a couple of cherry tomatoes

Carrot sticks, red pepper strips, celery, cucumber with houmous

Savoury muffin frittatas (as before)

Sugar free Granola-style healthy oat & date squares - a healthy version of flapjack



# SAY NO TO ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

One of the things I am questioned about most as a nutrition professional is sugar substitutes. Artificial sweeteners are man-made products that are no better for you than real sugar. And some - notably aspartame and acesulfame-K - have been linked to cancer.

Sugar alcohols like sorbitol are poorly broken down by the body, which can end up feeding the bad bacteria in the large intestine. And, what you may not know is that artificial sweeteners - and many other 'natural sweeteners' that find their way into so-called healthy food - behave in the body the same way as actual sugar by raising your blood sugar levels.

The very best scenario of all is that you wean yourself off sweeteners of any kind as this helps you appreciate natural sweetness of real food. If you continue to eat sweet things, your taste buds will always want sweet things. It's as simple as that. If you need a sugar fix, find it in real, natural foods (see below).

It's also worth considering phasing out not only sugary foods but checking the labels on convenience foods to see where sugar has been added. If your diet has traditionally been quite high in sugar products, the first few weeks can be a little tricky as your body, brain and taste buds start to adjust - but bear with it.



# TRY NATURAL SWEETENERS INSTEAD

Although the ideal scenario would be to wean yourselves off sweet generally - and this might seem tough, at least at first. Natural sweeteners like your own unsweetened apple sauce, dates, carrot puree or mashed banana can be helpful.

You'll find these in lots of healthy recipes.

Adding a pinch of salt (preferably sea salt) can bring out the natural sweetness in your food so you may find you don't need the sugar anyway. You can get into the habit of putting less than stated into many cake and dessert recipes.



# HEALTHY RECIPE LINKS

These resources offer a range of nutritious recipes. Choosing nourishing meal options can help keep you fuller for longer and manage your appetite. That way you are less likely to need sugary snacks between meals, as your energy should feel more balanced, consistent and even.

Maybe find something new below and give it a try this week!

[Granola recipe by Anna Earl | Nutrivival](#)

[Recipes - Nutrition for Wellbeing / Oscar Kilo](#)

[Recipes | Amelia Freer](#)

[Recipes – Jeannette Hyde](#)

[Healthy Food Recipes – The Doctor's Kitchen](#)

[All recipes | Jamie Oliver](#)

[Tesco Recipes](#)

[The Happy Pear - Plant Based Cooking & Lifestyle \(Vegan\)](#)

*Good Luck!*

