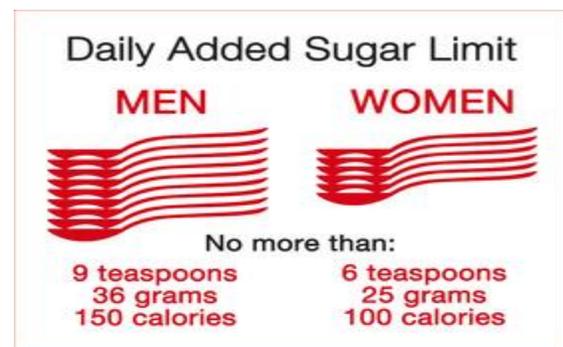




It's hard to resist all the holiday treats that you only see during this time of the year. Most Americans will gain an average of eight pounds from Thanksgiving to New Year's. We watch what we eat, BUT even then we find that there are "hidden" sugars" added our food during processing that make it hard to keep the pounds off.

Desserts, sodas, and energy/sports drinks are the top culprits of added sugars for most Americans. It's estimated that 50 percent of the sugar consumed by Americans is hidden in unexpected foods like ketchup, bread, crackers, salad dressing, cereals and oatmeal making up 13 percent of the total sugar intake. To make matters worse, sugar is used as a fermenting agent to help bread rise, a preservative in jams and jellies, and to balance acidity in foods containing vinegar. Some products can even be labeled "no added sugars" as long as the added sugar is used for thickening, texturizing, or browning.

A few centuries ago, most people consumed only a few pounds of sugar a year. Today, about 15% of the calories in the American adult diet—about 22 teaspoons—come from added sugars. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a limit on sugar to no more than 10 percent of a person's daily calories should come from added sugar. That amounts to about 12 teaspoons.



Added sugars can be hard to identify. **Read your labels carefully.** Look for "sugar" under carbohydrates in the ingredient list. Anything that ends in syrup or "ose", such as maltose or glucose, is all sugar. If any of these are among the first few ingredients on a food label, the food is likely high in sugar and you should consider an alternative.

Some evidence suggests there's a relationship between added sugars and obesity & diabetes. According to 2017 statistics from the Center for Disease Control, 30.3 million people (9.4%) in the U.S. have diabetes. In addition, 1 in 4 people with diabetes do not know that they have the disease.

Our bodies use sugar for energy. The food we eat is turned into glucose, then insulin from the pancreas helps this glucose move into the cells where it can be used to make energy. If you have diabetes, your body may not make enough insulin, may not use insulin in the right way, or both. That can cause too much glucose (sugar) in the blood.

So what can you do to decrease your sugar intake and the possibility of diabetes?

- Drink water or other calorie-free drinks instead of sugary drinks.
- Drink 100 percent fruit juice, or better yet, eat fresh fruit.
- Buy canned fruit packed in water or juice, not syrup.
- Choose breakfast cereals with less sugar. If sugar is one of the first ingredients, choose something else.
- Opt for reduced-sugar varieties of syrups, jams, jellies and preserves
- When baking, cut the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half and use spices like cinnamon or nutmeg to enhance the flavor.
- Choose fresh fruit or vegetables instead of candy and baked goods.

Bottom line: Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables and fewer processed foods is the easiest way to avoid added sugars. Daniel gave us this example when he was taken captive to Babylon. He wanted to honor God even with the food he chose to eat.

*“Daniel decided not to eat the king’s **food** or drink his wine...
After ten days they looked healthier and better fed than all the young men who ate the
king’s **food.**”*

Daniel 1:8 &15 (New Century Version)

If you would like to know more about hidden sugars, please see the information on the wall near the welcome center, go on-line to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at www.eatright.org, the Cleveland Clinic at <https://health.clevelandclinic.org>, or the Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/diabetes, or feel free to visit with me in the Parish Nurse office. I would be happy to share my resources with you.

Penny LaBerge
Parish Nurse