How to be Sugar Smart in Bristol

How to spot hidden sugars
How to understand food labels
How to eat in a healthier way

#sugarsmartbristol

Find out which Bristol organisations are getting involved, and how, by visiting sugarsmartbristol.co.uk
Sugar provides ‘empty’ calories – it is pure energy with no additional nutritional value.

The Government recommends children over 11 and adults should consume no more than 7.5 teaspoons* of added sugar a day. This amount is less for those who are younger. It’s suggested those aged 7-10 should have no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar and 4-6 year olds should have no more than 5 teaspoons of added sugar each day. For children under 5yrs avoid sweet snack foods and only offer water or milk to drink.

*1 teaspoon = 4g sugar

Why be Sugar Smart?

Reducing your sugar intake will help you:
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce tooth decay
- Help to protect against type 2 diabetes
- Improve your mood or behaviour
- Concentrate better
Sugar has many different names, some are naturally occurring for example those found in fruit (fructose) or milk (lactose), but sugars are added to foods for additional sweetness, flavour or as a preservative.

These may include:

- Sucrose *(table sugar)*
- Honey
- Agave Nectar
- Maple Syrup
- Coconut sugar
- Invert sugar
- Glucose
- Maltose
- Corn Syrup
- Dextrose
- Molasses
- Fruit Juice concentrate
It is the ‘added’ sugars that are the most unhealthy.

It is clear which foods contain sugar as they taste sweet, for example:

- Yoghurt (150g pot): X5
- Chocolate (100g): X13
- Ice Cream: X5

But some are harder to spot as they taste savoury, but can contain high amounts of added sugar, for example:

- Soups (per can): X5
- Pasta Sauces (150g jar): X3
- Baked Beans (per can): X3

Fruit juice and smoothies can cause confusion because although they contain a natural sugar (fructose), the fibre of the fruit is removed which makes it act like sucrose (table sugar).

The recommendation for both fruit juices and smoothies is that they should be limited to 150ml a day. For young children it is recommended that the fruit juice or smoothie be diluted one part juice/smoothie to one part water, ideally as part of a meal.
Sweeteners such as aspartame, sorbitol and stevia are often used as a substitute for sugar. They don’t add calories, but they do add sweetness to foods and are often used by people to help them cut down on their sugar intake. However, they do not help to get rid of a craving for sweet foods.

Low fat and processed foods are often artificially sweetened and can contain more sugar than the same full fat, unprocessed foods. Your taste buds will soon adapt if you cut back on sugar or sweet tasting foods and your cravings for sweet foods will lessen.

Sweeteners are not recommended for children under 5 years.
Cut down on your sugar intake

One of the easiest ways to reduce the amount of sugar is to have smaller portions, or have sweet foods less often:

- Reduce the sugar you add to hot drinks by ½ teaspoon at a time
- Dilute juices – 1 part juice to 1 part water
- Reduce portion sizes by sharing with friends/family/colleagues
- Set yourself sugar free days each week

Fresh, dried or frozen fruits and milk or plain yoghurt contain natural sugars and don’t count as containing ‘added’ sugar.
SWAP your sugar from high to lower sugar options:

- Swap sugary drinks (fizzy drinks, juice, hot chocolate) for water, herbal teas or semi-skimmed milk

- Choose a lower sugar breakfast cereal such as porridge oats or whole wheat cereal and sweeten with fresh fruit, for example a banana

- Processed foods often contain high amounts of added sugar, so try swapping these foods for fresh foods and try out new recipes

- Swap high sugar snacks such as sweets and chocolates for a handful of nuts or grapes
How to read a food label

When buying foods the best way to be Sugar Smart is to check the label. On the pack look for:

- The list of nutritional values (usually on the back)
- Per 100g column
- Total sugar or ‘Carbohydrates of which sugars’

Low sugar foods have less than 5g sugar per 100g

High sugar foods have more than 15g sugar per 100g

- Some labels show a traffic light system of red, amber and green – go for green!

Some healthy foods such as muesli which contain dried fruits will have high amounts of natural sugars (above 15g/100g) but are okay as part of a meal.