

4 Weeks to  
**Cut the Sweets**  
Sugar Challenge





## *Cut the Sweets* Sugar Challenge

**The Overall Challenge:** Cut down your added sugar consumption as much as possible.

**How to Track it:** For each week, track how you cut your sugar out. Note any symptoms that subside or increase (increased energy, weight loss, headaches, etc.) A note on your phone or an app, like MyFitnessPal, can help you keep a running tally of what works to encourage you to cut out sugar. If you prefer paper, we also included a printable tracker at the end of this guide.

**Why Eliminate Sugar?** As you may know, added sugar is in a ton of foods. Not just goodies like cookies, but in everything from pasta to salad dressing. Aside from increasing your risk of cavities, too much sugar can lead to issues like [diabetes](#) and [heart disease](#).

We challenge you to **kick sugar to the curb** for a month to see how you feel. In this guide, you'll find a new habit "challenge" to ease into each week. Cutting sugar is tough, but it's totally doable with this challenge!

## *Week 1 Challenge: Don't Drink Your Sugar*



***The challenge: Opt for healthier drink choices that won't leave you crashing.***

Nix your calorie and sugar consumption just by swapping out high-sugar beverages. It adds up over the day: A cup of coffee with flavored creamer in the morning and a few afternoon sodas may get you going — but it also causes energy slumps. Juice and smoothies — while seemingly healthy — also have a ton of sugar that can send you way over the recommended daily sugar intake.

Check out your beverage of choice. How much sugar are you simply drinking?

One 12-oz. can of Coke has **38 grams** of added sugar. That's way more than the daily sugar recommendation for a single day from the American Heart Association.

### **Alternative options to try:**

- Hot tea
- Plain water
- Black coffee
- Coconut water
- Flavored water
- Water with fruit slices

You may notice you have headaches from cutting out the caffeine if you were using caffeinated beverages to get through the day. Up your water intake and be sure to have a protein-filled snack — like a half of an avocado and cheese stick — to keep your energy levels up instead.

**Other added benefits of nixing added sugar?** Clear skin, improved focus, and decreased inflammation. Once you start seeing the perks of cutting out sugary drinks, it's enough to help you power through to the next challenge!

## *Week 2 Challenge: Read Nutrition Labels*



***The challenge: Aim to eat only natural sugars like fresh fruits. Don't let "healthy" food and marketing gimmicks trick you. Read labels and learn what to look for ("added sugar" is on the nutrition label) and aim to limit your added sugar. Educating yourself on hidden sugar names is your challenge.***

Breakfast bars, instant smoothies, and cereals are all marketed to appear "healthy." In reality, many have way more sugar than is necessary. By lunchtime, you've likely consumed your recommended daily allotted sugar amount. Check out labels to see how sugar hides. Use the [Wholesome app](#) to get alerts for when you're getting too much sugar.

Common nicknames for hidden sugar:

- Agave nectar
- Barley malt
- Barley malt syrup
- Buttered syrup
- Galactose
- Glucose
- Sucrose
- Brown rice syrup
- High-fructose corn syrup

Added sugar is hidden right in plain sight. Food producers have gotten creative with how they market items since word got out that too much sugar is a bad thing for the human body. You can find added sugar in everything from ketchup to salad dressings to yogurt and milk.

## Week 3 Challenge: Eat Only Natural Sugar



***The challenge: Now that you know how sugar hides, be mindful of your consumption. Opt for real, whole foods. Keep track of how much sugar you're actually eating for one full week. Then adjust it to the recommended American Heart Association (AHA) standards.***

Even the healthiest eaters can benefit from sugar reduction. According to the AHA: Men should limit sugar intake to no more than 36 grams of sugar per day. Women should ingest no more than 25 grams of sugar per day.

Here are some swaps to try to reduce sugar rushes:

*Instead of this...*

*Try this...*

Apple juice	Apple
Pasta sauce	Homemade sauce
Store-brand dressings	Homemade dressing (hello, olive oil!)
Sweet-and-sour chicken	Steamed wontons and veggies
Flavored yogurt	Plain Greek yogurt with fresh fruit
Boxed cereal	Homemade oatmeal with cinnamon
Muffin	Frittata muffin
Granola bar	Mix of nuts, coconut chips & toasted oats
Soda	Kombucha tea
Sour cream	Plain Greek yogurt
Milk chocolate	<a href="#">Dark chocolate</a>

## Week 4 Challenge: Say Goodbye to Sugar Cravings



***The challenge: Now that you've built up some resistance to caving into sugar, it should be a bit easier to walk away from it. Focus on curbing your sugar cravings to weaken your desire for it over time.***

Sometimes you have to physically walk away from temptation. Start practicing this in the grocery store. If you find yourself strolling down the ice cream aisle, keep on walking to the end. Challenge yourself to not even bring sweets into the house. In the workplace, avoid the breakroom if there's a plate of cookies tempting you.

Tips to stay away from excess sugar:

**Distract yourself** — Take a nice long walk, journal, drink water, etc. Pick a healthy activity that doesn't include eating sweets.

**Coach yourself** — Tell yourself, "I don't need sugar." Remind yourself how too much sugar makes you feel. Journal it in the moment if it helps!

**Makeover your snacks** — Keep your favorite [healthy snacks](#) on hand like fresh fruit or sparkling water.

**Keep sweets away** — Out of sight, out of mind. Don't have sweets at home or in the office. It will keep temptation levels down.

One of the best reasons to give up sugar is to see how you feel once you do it. Sure, you may notice you're a little cranky if you don't get your evening dessert. But how does the rest of your body feel? Carry that feeling of good health with you next time you want to indulge in sugary goodness.



## *Just Say No to Added Sugar*

Added sugar is extra, unnecessary calories that your body won't benefit from.

But what it will do is make you feel lethargic and add extra health issues to your life.

Sugar is found naturally in many foods — like grains and cheese — and those ones are okay for your health.

It's the added sugars that our body doesn't want or need. That "unnatural" sugar that your body can do without. Skipping the processed and added sugar lowers your heart disease, obesity, and diabetes risk, too.

And, honestly, is anything sweeter than good health? We challenge you to think not.



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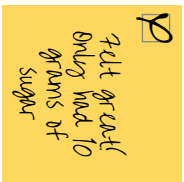
*Cut the Sweets*

Sugar Challenge

## Track Your Success

Check off each day that you cut out sugar. Use the extra space in the box to write notes about what worked well, what didn't, or other details such as the number of grams of added sugar.

Sample:



	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
WEEK 1	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
WEEK 2	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
WEEK 3	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
WEEK 4	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sugar Basics:

- 1 Teaspoon = about 4 grams of sugar  
Daily Recommended Limits for Added Sugar:
- Men: 9 teaspoons / 36 grams of sugar
  - Women: 6 teaspoons / 25 grams of sugar

\*Based on recommendations from the American Heart Association