



Kinship Link

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Pro Kinship for Kids

Inside this issue:

Eating Right with Less Added Sugars continued	2
Eating Right with Less Salt	2

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Eating Right with Less Added Sugars

Sugar is found naturally in some foods and drinks, like fruit and milk, but is also added to many of things. Added sugars give these items a sweet taste. Most Americans get too many calories from added sugars and over time this may affect their weight and health.

Many people think of desserts as the main source of added sugars, but many foods and drinks may contain added sugars. For example, sweetened drinks like regular soft drinks, some fruit drinks, and energy drinks are all sources of added sugars. Snack foods, like crackers, and even ready-to-eat foods, like pizza and pasta sauces, can be made with added sugars. Some people may also add sugar to what they eat and drink, like sprinkling sugar over cereal or pouring flavored creamer in coffee.

How to identify sources of added sugars is best done by looking for this information in the ingredients list. The ingredients that appear

first are in the largest amount. Be sure to look for foods and drinks that don't have sugar (or some other sweetener) listed as the first ingredient. Other examples of sweeteners and sources of added sugars include: brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup, molasses, sucrose, or white granulated sugar.

Sources of added sugars often lack nutrients needed for good health, while foods and drinks that contain natural sources of sugar provide nutrients, like vitamins and minerals. For example, fruits like strawberries are a great source of vitamin C, and milk provides vitamins A and D, and calcium.

It's not necessary to avoid all sources of added sugars. The problem is that many of us include too many sources of added sugars or eat and drink larger amounts than are

recommended. When this happens there is less room for more nutritious foods and drinks.

If you have a taste for something sweet try eating some fruit first. When you're thirsty reach for milk or water. Other ways to reduce sources of added sugars include: making or buying healthier versions of baked goods; including food and drinks with added sugars less often; and eating and drinking smaller amounts.

Tips on how to reduce sources of added sugars include:

- Sweeten low-fat plain yogurt with fresh, frozen, or canned (in its own juice) fruit in place of fruit-flavored yogurt.
- Add cinnamon and dried fruit to plain cooked oats instead of using instant flavored oatmeal.
- Substitute 100% fruit juice for fruit punch and other fruit-flavored drinks.

Eating Right with Less Added Sugars continued

- Switch from sweetened to unsweetened applesauce.
- Drink plain low-fat milk instead of chocolate milk.
- Use jams and jellies with no sugar added.
- Enjoy a homemade smoothie with frozen fruit, low-fat milk, and yogurt in place of ice cream.
- Quench your thirst with water, low-fat milk, or 100% fruit or

vegetable juice instead of sweetened beverages, like energy, soft, or sports drinks.



Eating Right with Less Salt

Most Americans are getting too much sodium from the foods they eat. And, the sodium in salt plays a role in high blood pressure, which is also known as hypertension. (Salt is the common name for sodium chloride.)

Adults and children ages 14 years and older should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams a day. Adults with prehypertension are encouraged to reduce their intake further to 1,500 milligrams per day, since that can help to reduce blood pressure.

Here are ways you can eat right with less salt:

- **Focus on fresh foods.** Many foods in the original form, such as fruits, vegetables, fresh meats, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, milk, yogurt, and grains like rice are naturally low in sodium. Include these foods more often in meals and snacks.
- **Eat processed and prepared foods less often.** Highly processed and ready-to-eat foods tend to be higher in sodium. Eat these foods only occasionally or in smaller amounts - especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli or luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, soups, and
- “instant” flavored noodles and rice.
- **Cook more often at home.** Enjoy home-prepared foods where you are in control of how much salt is added. Use little or no salt when cooking. Even if package instructions say to add salt to the water before boiling, it isn’t required and can be omitted. When using canned vegetables with salt added, be sure to drain and rinse the vegetables to reduce the amount of salt.
- **Try new flavors.** Skip the salt and try salt-free seasonings such as herbs, spices, garlic, vinegar, black pepper, or lemon juice. Make your own salt-free seasonings by combining herbs and spices.
- **Read food labels.** Read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients list to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Compare the amount of sodium listed and select the product with the lower amount. Look for foods labeled “low sodium”, “reduced sodium”, or “no salt added”.
- **Use caution with condiments.** Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressing, and seasoning packets are high in sodium. Try low-sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Sprinkle only a small amount from a

season packet, not the entire amount.

- **Allow your taste buds to adjust.** Like any change, it can take time for your taste buds to adapt to less salt. Foods lower in sodium may taste differently at first, but over time it’s possible to acquire a taste for foods with less salt.

Salt-Free Seasoning Blends

Boost the flavor of foods with salt-free herb and spice blends. Combine ingredients and store in a tightly covered jar. Rub or sprinkle them on food for added flavor.

Mixed herb blend: Mix together 1/4 cup dried parsley flakes, 2 tbsp. dried tarragon, and 1 tbsp. each of dried oregano, dill weed, and celery flakes.

Italian blend: Mix together 2 tbsp. each of dried basil and dried marjoram, 1 tbsp. each of garlic powder and dried oregano, and 2 tsp. each of thyme, crushed dried rosemary, and crushed red pepper.

Mexican blend: Mix together 1/4 cup chili powder, 1 tbsp. each of ground cumin, and onion powder, 1 tsp. each of dried oregano, garlic powder, and ground red pepper, and 1/2 tsp. cinnamon.

