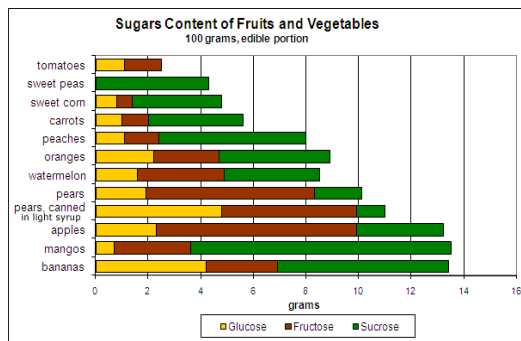


## Sugar Part II

Sucrose, a technical name for what we know as “sugar” is found naturally in sugar cane and sugar beets. Most of the sugar we use is harvested from these plants as well as occurring naturally in many of the foods we eat such as apples, oranges and carrots. Glucose, Fructose and Lactose are other types of sugars, which also occur naturally in the foods we eat.



Source: USDA Nutrient Laboratory

Pure sucrose crystals are naturally white and do not undergo any bleaching process during refining. In Canada, the method currently used to produce brown sugar is called “blending”, which is a process that combines the separately purified white sucrose crystals with refiners’ syrups such as fancy grade molasses. The difference between light (yellow) and dark brown sugar is that the darker brown sugars have more of the refiners’ syrup (molasses) left in the product.

Over the years sugar has played a versatile role in our food by providing sweetness and flavor along with helping to preserve foods like jams and jellies. It also acts as an inhibitor against the growth of microorganisms and helps hold moisture and prevents staleness in baked goods. It is however a simple carbohydrate that does not provide any necessary nutrients for our bodies. In fact, consuming too much sugar is linked to obesity and cavities.

Many turn to “sugar-free” or “diet” versions of foods in order to reduce sugar or calories in their diet without realizing that substitutes are used in

order to enhance the flavor while not compromising the sweetness of these foods. Sugar substitutes are loosely considered any sweetener used instead of regular table sugar (sucrose). They can be categorized as artificial, sugar alcohols, novel sweeteners and natural. Some manufacturers call their sweeteners “natural” even though they are processed or refined as in the case of stevia and some artificial sweeteners are derived from naturally occurring substances such as sucralose which comes from sugar.

### Sweetener Classifications:

**Artificial:** Acesulfame potassium, Aspartame (Equal, Nutrasweet), Neotame, Saccharine (Sugar Twin, Sweet N’Low), Sucralose (Splenda)

**Sugar Alcohols:** Erythritol, Hydrogenated starch (hydrolysate), Isomalt, Lactitol, Maltitol, Mannitol

**Novel Sweeteners:** Stevia, Tagatose, Trehalose,

**Natural Sweeteners:** Agave nectar, Date Sugar, Fruit juice concentrate, Honey, Maple Syrup, Molasses

Many will argue that artificial sweeteners assist with weight control, are a good alternative for diabetics and don’t promote tooth decay however there are others who will argue against these points citing studies that show consumption of more than 50 grams but sometimes as little as 10 grams per day may have a laxative effect, cause bloating, intestinal gas and diarrhea.

It pays to be an informed consumer when making choices. Foods marketed as sugar-free don’t mean they are free of calories and eating too many “sugar-free” or “diet” foods can still cause you to gain weight.

**Resources**  
 Canadian Sugar Institute  
 Mayo Clinic Publications

## Fun Food Facts!



Around 20,000BC, people in the islands of the South Pacific were the first to find sugar in sugar cane that grew naturally in their area however India was the first country to extract natural can juice to make the first crude sugar, which they called “gur”, in 500BC

## Did You Know?

Taste for sugar is acquired. Identifying the hidden sugars in your foods and cutting down slowly is a good way of reducing your sugar intake.

All ingredients listed on packages are in descending order by weight so relative position of sugar in an ingredients list can give you an idea of how much sugar it contains.

Sugar by other names:

- Cane Crystals
- Agave Nectar
- Corn Syrup
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Fruit Juice Concentrates
- Glucose
- Honey
- Lactose
- Maltose
- Molasses

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