

Sugar

Kids are having over 2 times more sugar than is recommended, with half of it coming from snacks and sugary drinks.

It can often be really difficult to know what a healthier choice might be – but we're here with all the info, tips and advice you need to help your family be healthier and happier.

Foods to watch out for

There can be a lot of sugar in everyday food and drinks. Do you know how much sugar is in these family favourites?



Juice drinks

They don't have salt or fat, but 1 juice pouch has **2 cubes** of sugar.



Yoghurts

Believe it or not, a pot of sugary yoghurt contains up to **6 cubes** of sugar!



Cereal bars

We tend to think of these as a healthier option, but a single bar has **3 cubes** of sugar.



Fun-sized sweets

The packet may be small, but it still contains **5 cubes** of sugar.




Ice cream

There are up to **5 cubes** of sugar in an ice cream.





Chocolate bars


Yikes! A single chocolate bar has a whopping **6 cubes** of sugar. That's the entire day's allowance for a 10-year-old!

 **Download the free NHS Food Scanner app**

With a speedy scan of your family's favourite foods, you can find healthier swaps for next time you shop.

It's as easy as scan, swipe, swap!



Other foods to watch out for

Along with these items, kids in general are also getting a lot of sugar from:

- fizzy drinks
- buns
- cakes
- pastries
- biscuits
- breakfast cereals

Shop smart!



Make a Good choice

Look out for the "Good choice" badge in store and when shopping online to quickly find better options.



Check the label

Many products have traffic light labels on the front of packs, which can be a really useful guide. Pick items with more greens and ambers, and cut down on ones with any reds.



Scan and know

Use the [free NHS Food Scanner app](https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/sugar/) to see how much sugar is in your favourite food or drink, and get suggestions for healthier swaps!



Bigger is not better

The big bottles of fizzy drinks and juice may seem like a good deal, but you're just getting more sugar! Go for water, lower-fat milks, sugar-free or no added sugar drinks instead.



Leave it on the shelf

It's the simplest trick in the book. If you do not have sugary sweets and treats in the house, you will not be able to eat them!



How to cut down on sugar

Even if you know what to look out for when it comes to sugary food, it can often be really difficult to know what to do instead.

Here are some simple tips and tricks to point you in the right direction, both at home or when shopping.

Reduce sugar at home



Juice and smoothies

Fruit juice only counts as 1 of your 5 A Day, no matter how much or how many different types you have. So limit it to no more than 150ml a day – and keep it to mealtimes, as juice can cause tooth decay.



DIY snacks

Ask your kids to help prepare healthier snacks from a selection of fruit, low-sugar cereal and unsalted nuts. It's a fun thing to do together, and they're more likely to eat it if they've made it.

[See homemade snack ideas](#)



Go bananas!

Try adding a sliced banana to wholewheat cereal biscuits or low-fat, lower-sugar yoghurt. You can also use it as a healthy topping for toast – a great way to get 1 of your 5 A Day.



Drink smart

A quarter of the sugar kids have every day comes from sugary drinks. Swap soft drinks, juice and flavoured milks for water, lower-fat milks and diet, sugar-free, or no added sugar drinks.

[More healthier food swaps](#)



Liven up your yoghurt

Low-fat, lower-sugar yoghurt topped with chopped fruit or berries makes a great dessert, and saves loads of sugar over typical yoghurts, ice cream or other sugary puddings. Counting towards your 5 A Day is another bonus!



The effects of too much sugar

Too much sugar is bad for children's health as it can lead to the build-up of harmful fat on the inside that we cannot see.

This fat can cause weight gain and serious diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Having too much sugar can also lead to painful tooth decay – every 10 minutes, a child in England has a tooth removed in hospital.



Lunchbox and lunchtime swaps

When lunchtime rolls around, it's easy to eat more sugar or salt than we might realise.

Try some of our simple swaps, and remember to check out our page for [loads more lunchbox inspiration](#).



Swap from

- ✗ Split pot yoghurts and pudding pots
- ✗ Cake bars and cereal bars
- ✗ Muffins and chocolate
- ✗ Crisps
- ✗ Juice pouches and fizzy drinks
- ✗ Tinned soup
- ✗ Ham and cheese sandwiches



Swap to

- ✓ Lower-sugar fromage frais or plain natural yoghurt
- ✓ Sugar-free jelly
- ✓ A slice of malt loaf or a fruited teacake
- ✓ Fresh or tinned fruit (in juice, not syrup)
- ✓ Plain popcorn, plain rice cakes or raisins
- ✓ No-added-sugar juice drinks, or water with berries and chopped fruit
- ✓ Homemade [spiced chicken and vegetable soup](#) or [harvest vegetable soup](#)
- ✓ Our delicious [beefed up samies](#)

Healthier food swaps

These simple food swap ideas can help cut down on sugar, salt and fat in your and your family's diet, plus discover easy ways to make a swap when you next shop.

Even just 1 or 2 everyday swaps can really make a difference and go a long way to making each day healthier – but the more you make, the better!

Dinner swaps

Salt and saturated fat can really add up at dinnertime without us noticing – there can be a surprising amount of both in everyday foods.

Give some of these dinner swaps a go, or browse our [dinner recipes](#) for loads of tasty, healthier meal ideas.



Swap from

- ✗ Sausages
- ✗ Pizza
- ✗ Salt and soy sauce
- ✗ Ketchup
- ✗ Brown sauce
- ✗ Mustard
- ✗ Gravy



Swap to

- ✓ Low-fat mince – try our [spaghetti bolognese](#) or [meatballs and sauce](#) recipes
- ✓ Our [cheats' pizza calzone](#)
- ✓ Different herbs, spices and seasoning, like paprika, oregano or lemon juice
- ✓ Reduced-salt and reduced-sugar versions of sauces

Drink swaps

A quarter of the sugar kids have every day comes from sugary drinks – help them cut back by making these easy swaps, and remember to keep juice drinks to mealtimes only to help prevent tooth decay.



Swap from

- ✗ Cola and other fizzy drinks
- ✗ Juice drinks
- ✗ Milkshakes
- ✗ Whole milk



Swap to

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Sugar-free drinks
- ✓ No-added-sugar drinks
- ✓ Lower-fat milks

Breakfast swaps

Sugar and fat are the biggest things to watch out for at breakfast time – try some of these easy swaps, or see our [breakfast recipes](#) to help you start the day smart!



Swap from

- ✗ Chocolate cereal
- ✗ Frosted flakes
- ✗ Honey crunch cereal
- ✗ Croissants
- ✗ Cereal bars



Swap to

- ✓ Wheat biscuit cereal
- ✓ Shredded wholegrain cereal
- ✓ No-added-sugar muesli
- ✓ Porridge
- ✓ Wholemeal toast
- ✓ Plain natural yoghurt topped with chopped fruit

Snack and pudding swaps

Whether it's fighting the after-school tummy rumbles or rounding off dinner with a tasty pud, sugar is the main watch-out here.

But even if they don't taste of it, some of these snack foods can contain a lot more salt (and fat) than you might realise too!

Give these easy swaps a go, then head to our [healthier snacks](#) page for loads more ideas, suggestions and tips.



Swap from

- ✗ Biscuits
- ✗ Chocolate
- ✗ Cake bars
- ✗ Chocolate pudding pots
- ✗ Doughnuts
- ✗ Muffins
- ✗ Crisps
- ✗ Salted peanuts
- ✗ Split-pot and higher-sugar yoghurts



Swap to

- ✓ A slice of malt loaf or fruited teacake
- ✓ Fresh or tinned fruit (in juice, not syrup) or fruit salad
- ✓ A scotch pancake or crumpet
- ✓ Sugar-free jelly or lower-sugar custard
- ✓ Crackers topped with lower-fat cheese
- ✓ Bread or toast with lower-fat spread
- ✓ A bagel topped with sliced banana
- ✓ Plain popcorn or rice cakes
- ✓ Unsalted mixed nuts
- ✓ Chopped veg with lower-fat hummus
- ✓ Lower-sugar yoghurts or lower-sugar rice pudding