

3 EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CUT THE SUGAR YOU CONSUME

- 1) **KEEP OFF THE SWEET STUFF – which crops up in the most surprising places. (Make your own sweet treats).**
- 2) **KEEP YOUR CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE LOW – wtf's a carbohydrate?**
- 3) **EAT FEWER TIMES A DAY**

Excited?

Here we go with a bit more detail

1) KEEP OFF THE SWEET STUFF

Normal sweet stuff

This of course is the most obvious place to weed out. Biscuits, chocolates, sweets, puddings, cakes. **But did you know there's an alternative?**

If, like me, you love sweet things, there are one or two safe choc bars and cakes to buy – if you're prepared to search to the end of the earth for them, but basically if you want a treat from time to time – it's best to get your pinny on and make it yourself.

Did you know you can buy a safe alternative to sugar in all the main supermarkets? It's called **Xylitol**. It sounds like an artificial sweetener, which you definitely want to avoid, but the good news is, it isn't. It's a thing called a sugar alcohol, it's made from birch bark, of all things and it has zero sugar. There are a few natural zero/very low natural sweeteners that you can use (beware of things like agave, maple syrup that simply are sugar by another name), but xylitol is the easiest to find.

All the main supermarkets sell it. (See pic of the packet below) You'll normally find it on the supermarket shelf next to the normal sugar).

You can use it instead of sugar like-for- like in pudding and cake recipes. But I actually recommend you use less.

Why?

If you stop eating highly sweetened stuff – like the biscuits, choc you're used to, you will get used to being genuinely satisfied with a milder sweet taste quicker. Your palate changes. In fact after a while, if you taste a sugary cake or biscuit, it will taste pretty disgusting.:



Roll over image to zoom in

Sugar in other food (checking the info on the back of food packets)

Sugar isn't just in obvious stuff like biscuits and chocolate. There can be a surprising amount in food you'd least expect to see it in – such as salad dressings, ketchups, ready meals, even foods promoted as healthy foods or that are free from refined sugar etc. So it's a really good idea keep your glasses to hand and start checking the back of the food packets you buy.

What are you looking for?

The NHS guideline for type 2 diabetics, is we **avoid foods containing more than 5g of sugars per 100g of overall content.**

See example below:

So you're looking first for the column that says **Per 100grams.**

Then look for **Carbohydrates – of which sugars.** (This example of a packet of cornflour has 0 grams – however you'll see that it actually has a helluva lot of carbohydrates – so best not to use a lot of it. (More detail about carbs in the next section).

Store in a cool, dry place. Best before end: see base of pack.


NUTRITION

As sold

Typical values	Per 100g	Per 25g	% RI*	RI* for an average adult
Energy	1517kJ 357kcal	379kJ 89kcal	5%	8400kJ 2000kcal
Fat	0.6g	0.2g	<1%	70g
of which saturates	0.0g	0.0g	0%	20g
Carbohydrate	87.5g	21.9g		
of which sugars	0.0g	0.0g	0%	90g
Fibre	0.0g	0.0g		
Protein	0.5g	0.1g		
Salt	0.2g	0.1g	1%	6g

Pack contains 20 servings
*Reference intake of an average adult (8400kJ / 2000kcal)

Recycling



Fruit

You'd expect fruit to be healthy wouldn't you? because its natural. But fructose, the sugar that's primarily in fruit can raise blood glucose too. So you need to be a bit careful with fruit.

First and foremost - DON'T DRINK FRUIT JUICE! It's really not healthy. In fact, it's not much better than knocking back a fizzy sugary drink. It's not healthy for anyone, but for type 2 diabetics and others with raised insulin, it should be avoided like the plague

(NB If you eat an orange, rather than drink orange juice, it's not nearly as bad as drinking the juice because the fibre in the fruit slows down the rate of the sugar absorption).

Avoid dried fruit if you can – raisins, sultanas, prunes etc. These are much more sugary than normal fruit.

The best fruits for low sugar are berries – strawberries, blueberries, raspberries. All other fruits need to be eaten in moderation really.

2) KEEP YOUR CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE LOW – wtf a carbohydrate?

What's carbohydrate?

It's the comforting stodge part of the meal basically – food like rice, pasta, cereals, bread, potatoes, crisps, oats, waffles, pastry.

Whats the problem with carbs?

Carbohydrates convert to blood glucose in the body and can raise blood sugar levels in a similar way as a cake or biscuit. (Strangely, not all NHS staff have caught up with this fact yet, but it is becoming increasingly recognised. Including by the national diabetes organisation).

It can feel a pretty drastic change to cut these things out completely because they're so ingrained in our diet. (But its not impossible. I can testify to that).

However if this is a step too far at the moment, there's definitely very helpful things you can do to reduce your carb intake and make a difference to your blood sugar levels.

a) stop eating "refined" carbohydrates

What does refined mean? - Basically choose brown rice over white, wholewheat pasta over white pasta, dense, wholemeal bread over white sliced.

b) Change the proportion of carbohydrates on your plate

Instead of half your plate being potato or rice, put a much, much smaller portion on and compensate with more veggies, meat/fish/eggs, cheese/nuts, beans (not baked beans though), lentils. (Things like meat, fish, eggs, cheese or nuts and seeds will actually make you feel **full for longer** than a stodgy carbohydrate foodstuff will too).

c) **Stop eating breakfast cereals** - if you currently eat them. These are sold as healthy but they are all, without exception, high in sugar and carbohydrate and they play havoc with blood sugar – even porridge oats can create a blood sugar car crash for some people (Me for example!).

d) Check the back of the food packets for Carbohydrate content.

quite simply, if the percentage of carbs per 100g is high – put it back on the shelf or use it very sparingly.

e) Beware of "Carb Creep".

It's easy for the stodgy food to start creeping bit by bit back into your diet if you're still eating them in some measure. So it's helpful to have some rules. For example – eating bread for breakfast only, or keeping one meal a day carbohydrate free. And just stop and check from time to time that you're not going off into the long grass. It's easy to do. Especially if you've been away for a while and its not been possible to eat as carefully as you would normally do at home.

3) EAT FEWER TIMES A DAY

This is a really simple way to make a significant difference.

From the point of view of controlling blood sugar and insulin - its best to eat fewer times in the day and to eat within a restricted time window.

This means – better to eat 3 - or even just 2 big, filling meals a day, with a good rest in between meals, rather than eating 3 smaller, less satiating meals and then eating snacks in between. Grazing and eating too often really messes with your body's ability to control blood sugar.