



7TH GRADE | INFORMATIONAL TEXT ARTICLE ↘

Simple Switches for a Healthier Eating Pattern

What is An Eating Pattern?

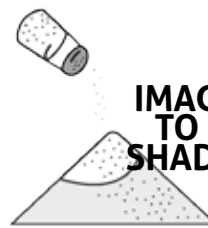
When we think of patterns we usually think of a colorful design that repeats like on checkered shirts, plaid shorts, and striped pants. In music, we hear repeating patterns in the lyrics and the rhythm. Patterns are everywhere. Not only do we see and hear patterns, but our lives follow them, too. An **eating pattern** describes the kinds of foods you eat over time. Think about the foods you eat frequently, and the foods you eat only once in a while. This is your eating pattern. Students like you can make simple switches within the food groups to create a healthier eating pattern. Whether you are making choices at a fast food restaurant, choosing between snacks, or making choices in your school cafeteria, you have the power to create a healthier eating pattern and choose more nutritious foods.

Vocabulary Words are in **bold** and underlined.

How Middle Schoolers Eat

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), if you are like the average middle school student you probably eat more **added sugars**, **saturated fats**, and **sodium** than is healthful. Research shows that most kids in middle school are eating almost twice as much added sugar, over 1,000 milligrams of extra sodium, and are exceeding the maximum **recommended** amount of saturated fat each day. Most middle school students are eating too many sweets, sodas, hamburgers, tacos, hot dogs and other foods that are major sources of added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Dietary patterns with too much of those nutrients may contribute to health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and osteoporosis.

MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF SODIUM RECOMMENDED FOR 9-13 YEAR OLDS:



2,200 mg

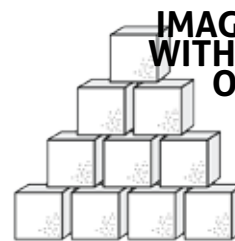
ACTUAL AMOUNT OF SODIUM CONSUMED:

IMAGE TO BE UPDATED TO REMOVE LINE ON SHADING FOR SALT PILE



3,200 mg

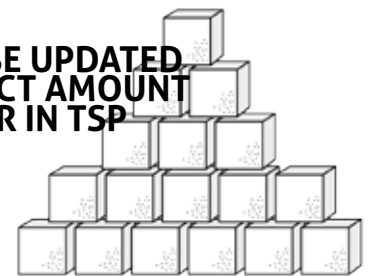
MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ADDED SUGARS RECOMMENDED FOR 9-13 YEAR OLDS:



40g or 10 tsp of sugar

ACTUAL AMOUNT OF ADDED SUGARS CONSUMED:

IMAGES TO BE UPDATED WITH CORRECT AMOUNT OF SUGAR IN TSP



90g or 22 tsp of sugar

* 1 cube = 1 tsp of sugar
1 tsp = 4 grams

What's the Big Deal with Too Much Added Sugar, Saturated Fat, and Sodium?

Take a look at the information below about the health impacts of dietary patterns that are too high in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats.

EATING PATTERNS WITH LOWER AMOUNTS OF ADDED SUGARS

CAN LOWER THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE, OBESITY, TYPE 2 DIABETES, SOME CANCERS, AND TOOTH DECAY.

EATING PATTERNS WITH LOWER AMOUNTS OF SODIUM

CAN LOWER THE RISK OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION).

EATING PATTERNS WHERE SATURATED FAT IS REPLACED BY UNSATURATED FAT

CAN HELP LOWER THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE.

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a condition where a person has too much glucose — the body's main source of energy for cells — in their bloodstream. Although glucose is found naturally in the body, it also comes from many foods. Too much glucose in the blood can cause serious health problems.

Where do the added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium come from?

What foods are adding the most added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium to the diets of middle schoolers? Take a look at the graphic below to see the top food sources of added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium in the diets of middle school students. Do any of these foods show up frequently in your eating pattern?

ADDED SUGARS



Desserts and sweet snacks (i.e. cookies and candy); sugar-sweetened beverages (i.e. sodas and sports drinks)

SODIUM



Burgers, tacos, and sandwiches; rice, pasta and other grain-based dishes; pizza

SATURATED FAT



Burgers, tacos, and sandwiches; desserts and sweet snacks; higher fat milk/yogurt; pizza

Simple Switches: The Middle School Edition

If you're following the typical middle school dietary pattern with lots of foods that are high in sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars, you may be on the road to health issues now and in the future. But there are some simple switches that you can make to include more tasty and nutritious foods in your daily eating pattern whether you're eating fast food, a meal at home, food from school, or a snack.

TYPICAL CHOICES

MENU

MEAL	NUTRITION INFO
MEAL 1: Burger, Fries, Large (32 oz) soda	1523g sodium 90g added sugars 34g saturated fats
MEAL 2: Pepperoni pizza, Sweet tea	620g sodium 45g added sugars 5g saturated fats
SNACK: Cheese puffs, 20 oz. Sports drink	345g sodium 30g added sugars 2g saturated fats



SIMPLE SWITCHES

MENU

MEAL	NUTRITION INFO
MEAL 1: Grilled chicken sandwich, Salad, Water	1091g sodium 5g added sugars 5g saturated fats
MEAL 2: Slice of plain pizza, Green beans, Orange slices, Low fat (1%) milk	525g sodium 1g added sugars 4g saturated fats
SNACK: Lite popcorn, Sparkling water	33g sodium 0g added sugars 0g saturated fats



Tips and Tricks for Healthier Meals and Snacks

Now you see how simple switches can make a huge difference in the healthfulness of your overall dietary pattern. Here are three easy tips tailored to the busy lives of middle school students, to help you figure out how to make simple switches for a healthier eating style.

- 1. When eating out compare nutrition information** between foods and make a healthier choice. Most restaurants have the full nutrition information including the added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium content of their meals listed on their websites. Take a look before you order and choose meals with lower numbers. Another way to avoid added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium in restaurant meals is to cook more meals at home using healthy ingredients. Check out What's Cooking (<https://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>) for fresh, tasty and healthy menu ideas.

2. **Instead of salty snacks and candy**, choose fruits and vegetables. Sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat can really add up in the snacks that kids choose. Reach for fruits and vegetables instead of salty or sugary foods when it's time for a snack. Most middle school students are not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and snacks can be a good place to start adding more to your diet.
3. **Swap out the sugar- sweetened beverage** for a healthier drink choice. Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and include low-fat or fat-free milk or 100% juice. Your intake of added sugars will go way down if you swap out sugary beverages for a more wholesome choice.

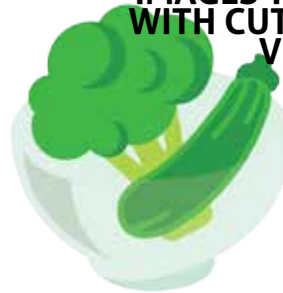


RECOMMENDED AMOUNT
OF FRUIT: 1.5-2 cups



ACTUAL AMOUNT OF
FRUIT EATEN: 1 cup

IMAGES TO BE UPDATED
WITH CUT-UP FRUIT AND
VEGGIES



RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF
VEGETABLES: 1.5-2 cups



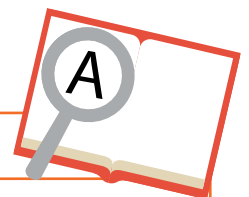
ACTUAL AMOUNT OF
VEGETABLES EATEN:
1 cup

Conclusions: Lead the Way With Your Healthy Eating Pattern

Most American adults are still eating too much added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium. And 75 percent of all adults in the United States still do not eat enough vegetables, fruits, and dairy. Wouldn't it be great if kids set the example? What if kids led the way to a healthy future for everyone? Make some simple switches and share your wins with your friends and family. Every food and beverage choice matters.

- Most middle school students are eating too many foods loaded with added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats.
- Too much added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat are associated with health problems.
- Middle school students can make simple switches in meals and snacks to create a healthier eating pattern.

VOCABULARY



Added sugar: Sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared.

Eating pattern: The combination of foods and beverages that makes up everything an individual eats over time.

Recommend: to suggest that someone do (something)

Saturated Fats: Fats that are usually solid at room temperature. They are most often found in animal

products such as beef, pork, and chicken, and are associated with health problems when consumed in excessive amounts.

Sodium: A mineral generally present in the form of salt (sodium) that your body needs in small amounts to work properly. However, when consumed in excessive amounts sodium can raise the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension).



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Living in the Land of Added Sugars



Too Much of a Good Thing

You may have heard the expression “everything in moderation,” but what does that really mean? Can there really be such a thing as “too much” when it comes to the things we love to eat? Think about birthdays, and feeling sick after eating too much cake. Turns out we sometimes eat too much of certain foods without even realizing how it’s affecting our health. Moderation is important for staying healthy.

The Problem with Added Sugar

The amount of **added sugar** in the food supply has grown dramatically over the past century. In 1909, there were 84 pounds of added sugars available per person in the food supply. By 2014, that had increased to 131 pounds of added sugar per person!¹

The majority of the added sugars in today’s food supply end up in beverages like soft drinks, sports drinks, lemonade, sweetened iced tea, and fruit drinks – and middle school students are major consumers of those types of beverages. Added sugars may add flavor, but they also add calories without any nutrients and can make it hard to maintain a healthy weight, a healthy body, and healthy teeth.

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, added sugars are **recommended** to make up no more than 10 percent of calories per day. The average middle school student needs 2100 calories per day which means no more than 210 calories are recommended from added sugar. 210 might not seem like a lot, but it can add up quickly. The average middle school student consumes 17 percent of their daily calories in the form of added sugars.² That’s about 360 calories, or 90 grams of added sugars. That’s over 22 teaspoons of sugar a day!

ADDED SUGARS IN THE FOOD SUPPLY (PER PERSON)



1909:
84 POUNDS

2014:
131 POUNDS

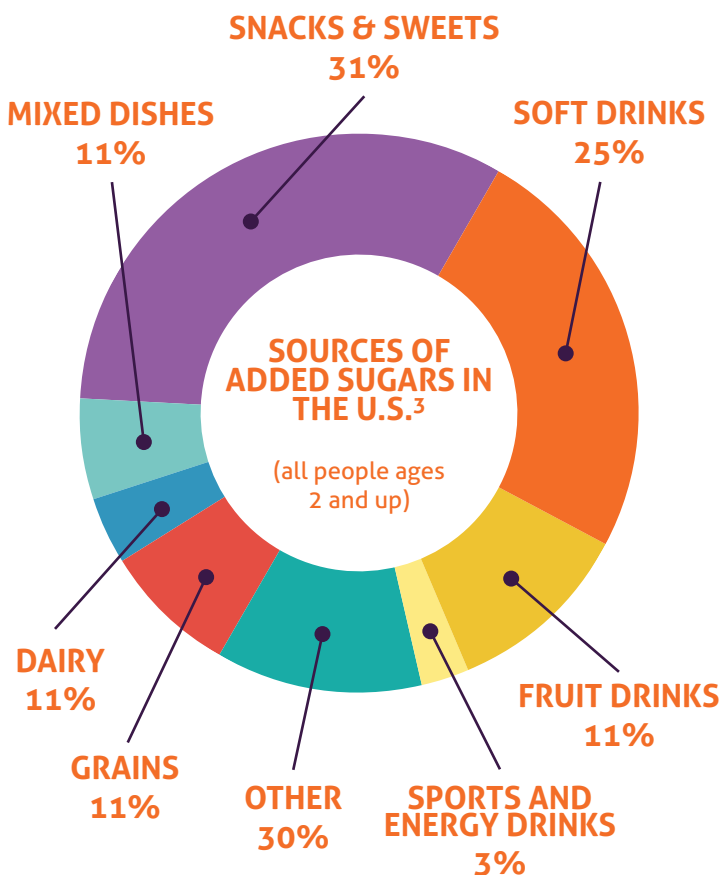
1. United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. “Sugars and sweeteners (added).” Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System. August 2016. <<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-availability-per-capita-data-system/>>.

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/a-closer-look-at-current-intakes-and-recommended-shifts/#figure-2-9>>.

Added Sugars Are Not So Sweet

Eating patterns that are lower in added sugars can help decrease the risk of tooth decay, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancers, and obesity. Consuming too many foods and beverages that are high in calories from added sugars makes it difficult to achieve a healthy **calorie balance** and can contribute to obesity. As you can see from the figure above, burning off extra calories from added sugar can be very time consuming! Because every food and beverage choice matters over time, it's important to start adopting healthier habits now.

Where Do You Consume Most of Your Added Sugars?



3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/a-closer-look-at-current-intakes-and-recommended-shifts/#figure-2-9>>.
4. UA Review of Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents. Federal Trade Commission. December 2012. <<https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports/review-food-marketing-children-and-adolescents-follow-report/121221foodmarketingreport.pdf>>.

Marketing Sugary Foods to Middle Schoolers

As a middle school student, you may not realize that you are one of the food industry's prime customers for marketing sugary foods. Did you know that...

The food industry spent...



marketing foods and drinks to teens ages 12-17.

Marketers spent...



marketing soft drinks to teens ages 12 - 17. And the vast majority of those beverages contain added sugar.

The food industry even spent over...



marketing soft drinks to kids in school.⁴

Marketing is everywhere!

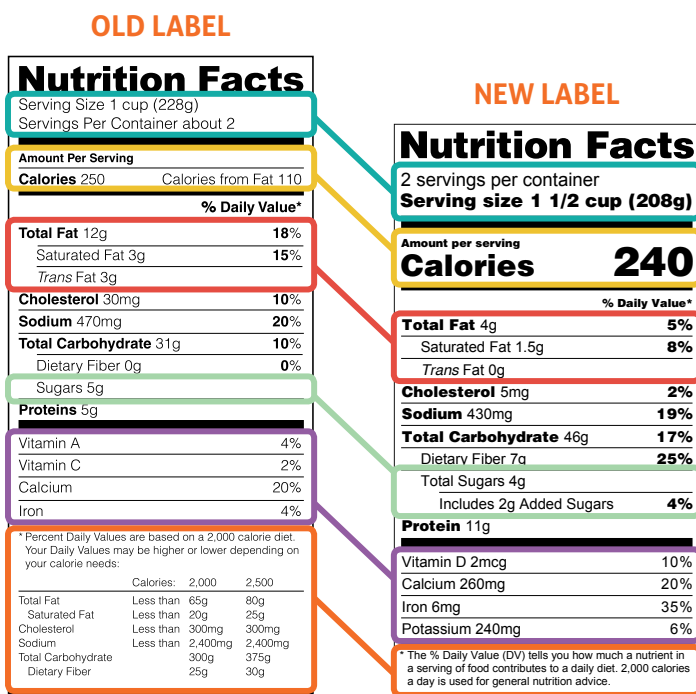


The food industry is marketing many sugary foods and beverages to middle school students through television, radio, and print advertising, websites, apps, social media, product packaging, in-store marketing, movies, video games, and through celebrity and athlete endorsements.

The New Nutrition Facts Label and You

Good news! The new Nutrition Facts label will provide more information about added sugars to help you take control and make healthier decisions.

In 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration finalized a new Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods that makes it easier for you to make informed food choices that support a healthy diet. The updated label is expected to begin appearing on many food packages by 2018 and it has a new design and to help consumers make more informed food choices.



The new Nutrition Facts label makes it easier to see how many added sugars your beverages and foods have.

Added Sugars in the Ingredients List

You may not be aware that you are consuming added sugars. There are many different types of sugars with many different names. When you look for added sugars in foods and beverages, see if the ingredient list contains any of the following kinds of sugar:

- anhydrous dextrose
- brown sugar
- confectioner's or powdered sugar
- corn syrup
- corn syrup solids
- dextrose
- fructose
- high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)
- honey
- lactose
- maltose
- maple syrup
- molasses
- nectars (e.e. peach nectar, pear nectar)
- sucrose

Choosing Better Beverages

Like the old Nutrition Facts label, the new Nutrition Facts label lists the ingredients used to make the food or beverage. Read the ingredient listing to find out which foods and beverages have added sugars.

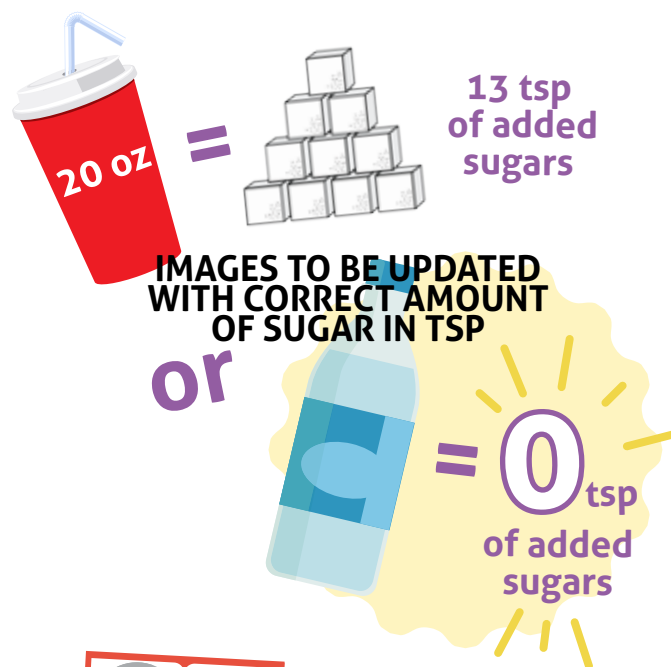
Unlike the old label, the new label will include a new "percent **daily value**" for added sugars. You can use this number to decide whether or not the added sugar content exceeds the daily recommended limit (10%) or not. You can use this information to choose foods with little (or no) added sugars based on the Daily Value information that will be on the label. This new information is especially important in today's world because serving sizes are bigger than they were 20 years ago. Take a look at the graphic to the right to get an idea about how serving sizes of sugary beverages have grown over time.



5. "Sugary Drinks and Obesity Fact Sheet." The Nutrition Source. Harvard School of Public Health, 26 May 2015. <<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary-drinks-fact-sheet/>>

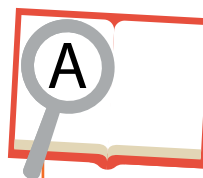
Switch It Up and Keep it Fresh with Healthy Beverages

Water is refreshing and has zero calories. By replacing a sugar-sweetened beverage with water you avoid drinking added calories from added sugars. This move contributes to a healthy calorie balance. Plain low-fat (1%) and fat free milk and 100% fruit juice are also great options to choose over sugar-sweetened beverages. Each time you reach for water instead of a 20 ounce sugary soft drink, you save, 13 teaspoons of added sugars. Reaching for healthier beverages is one healthy step that every middle school student can take.



Conclusions:

- Middle schoolers are getting too many added sugars, primarily from sugar-sweetened beverages like soda and sports drinks.
- Food marketers are reaching out to middle school students with many advertisements for sugar sweetened foods and beverages
- Eating patterns that are lower in added sugars can help decrease the risk of tooth decay, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancers, and obesity
- Reading the food label and ingredient list can help you choose foods that are low in added sugars.
- Choosing water, plain fat-free or low fat milk, or 100% fruit juice instead of sugar sweetened beverages can help middle school students decrease their added sugar consumption.



VOCABULARY

Added sugar: Sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared.

Calorie balance: Describes the balance of calories in from foods and beverages you eat and drink each day and calories you burn through basic body function and physical activity.

Daily values: The amount of nutrients recommended for Americans aged 4 and older to eat everyday.

Limit: A point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass.

Recommend: to suggest that someone do (something)

