

Nutrition & Wellness for Life © 2012
Chapter 5: Sugar Detective—Math Activity

To be a sugar detective, you don't need a badge and a magnifying glass, but you do need a little brainpower. Many people are amazed to discover how much sugar lurks within the foods they eat. Do you know how to find it?

An apple tastes deliciously sweet because of the naturally occurring sugar it contains, but what about a cookie? It tastes sweet because sugar has been added when making the dough. Many foods that you consume have had sugar added during processing. Candy, doughnuts, pancake mixes, salad dressings, barbecue sauces, and more may all be made with sugar that is added. Thus, these sugars are called "added sugars." These foods contribute sugar to your diet, but often without the benefits of many other nutrients. Calories that come from added sugars and/or solid fats should be limited.

Now, learn how to track down the added sugar in your diet by answering the questions that follow. Use these facts to help:

- The United States Department of Agriculture recommends that on a 2,000-calorie diet, people may consume about 8 teaspoons of added sugar each day.
- On average, teen males can consume 2,800 calories per day. A limit of 11 teaspoons of added sugar is recommended for this number of calories.
- On average, teen females can consume 2,200 calories per day. A limit of 9 teaspoons of added sugar is recommended for this number of calories.
- One teaspoon of sugar equals about 15 calories.

Activity Questions:

1. Suppose you drink a 12-ounce soft drink that has 160 calories. Then you refill the cup halfway and drink that. About how many teaspoons of sugar have you consumed?

2. Sugar can add up quickly in the diet. Suppose the Nutrition Facts panel on a jar of honey says 1 tablespoon equals 50 calories. You put 2 tablespoons of the honey on toast for breakfast. About how many teaspoons of sugar did you consume?

Name _____ Date _____

3. Suppose an average teen male consumes the foods in questions 1 and 2. How does the sugar he consumed compare to his limit for the day?
4. Ingredient lists on food labels can tell you when a product contains sugar. These are some of the terms you might see: corn sweetener, honey, fruit juice concentrate, invert sugar, malt syrup, maple sugar, and molasses. On the Internet, search for these additional terms and explain what they are: a) Dextrose; b) Fructose; c) High fructose corn syrup; d) Lactose; e) Sucrose; f) Turbinado.
5. What suggestions would you give to someone who wants to manage the amount of added sugar he or she consumes?