



# All About Sugars For Children 2-5 Years

## What is sugar?

- Sugar is a carbohydrate (like bread, pasta, and rice), which is the primary source of energy for the brain and muscles. It is necessary for children to have energy to learn and play. Sugar can be part of a nutritious diet.
- Sugar is naturally found in fruits and vegetables. It is also found added in other foods such as cakes, cookies, candies, and pastries.

## Is sugar harmful?

- Sugar in moderation is a part of a balanced diet. Having sugary foods or beverages on occasion will not impact overall health and is part of important life events such as birthdays and cultural celebrations.
- Too much refined sugar can contribute to health problems such as diabetes, cavities, and weight gain.
- It is important not to restrict sugar as it can lead to disordered eating in children, increased cravings of sugar, and feelings of guilt around food.



## What are the recommendations?

- Total sugars include both added sugars and free sugars. The World Health Organization recommends that free sugar (includes added sugars and sugars naturally present in honey, syrup, and fruit juice) consumption should be reduced and should be less than 10% of total calorie intake. For a toddler aged 2-5 years, this would be approximately 24 to 32 grams of free sugars per day, depending on their weight and activity level.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
<b>Calories 110</b>	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
<b>Fat / Lipides 0 g</b> 0 %	
Saturated / saturés 0 g 0 %	
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g</b>	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g 0 %	
<b>Sugars / Sucres 22 g</b>	<b>22 %</b>
<b>Protein / Protéines 2 g</b>	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 0 mg</b>	0 %
<b>Potassium 450 mg</b>	10 %
<b>Calcium 30 mg</b>	2 %
<b>Iron / Fer 0 mg</b>	0 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

New % Daily Value  
for total sugars

New footnote  
to help interpret  
the % Daily Value

- Added or free sugars are often called “hidden sugars” because they aren’t separated from naturally occurring sugars on nutrition labels, as seen in the image on the left from [Health Canada](#).
- However, you can identify them in the ingredients list below from Health Canada. Added sugars are refined sugars and are grouped together. You can also identify them by looking for sugars (such as brown sugar), syrups (such as cane syrup), or ingredients that end in “ose” (such as sucrose).
- Some common foods that contain high amounts of sugar added are frosted breakfast cereals, granola bars, flavoured yogurt, and chocolate milk.

**Ingredients:** Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Flour • Vegetable oil shortening • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red  
**Contains:** Wheat • Egg





# All About Sugars For Children Aged 2-5

## Encouraging mindful eating

- Make mealtime fun and collaborative using Ellyn Satter's [Division of Responsibility](#).
- Parents decide **WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE**.
- Children decide **IF and HOW MUCH**.

## Strategies for healthy eating

- Have your child bring a water bottle to school.
- Dilute fruit juice with water 50/50 and opt for unsweetened milk or non-dairy milk alternatives.
- Avoid using sugary foods and beverages as a reward, and avoid labelling them as a “treat”, “good”, or “bad”.
- Lead by example: children’s eating habits are often modelled after their parents’ eating habits.
- Explore [Canada’s Food Guide](#) for more healthy eating tips.



## Nutritious snack suggestions

Here are some examples and resources for nutritious snack suggestions for your children.

- Fresh or frozen fruits
- Vegetables and hummus dip
- Sliced apples with nut or sunflower seed butter
- Plain dairy or coconut yogurt with sliced fruits
- Homemade [yogurt banana split](#)
- Cheese and crackers
- Snack recipe book: [Snack Healthy, Snack Happy!](#)



## Resources

For further information, check out these links:

- [UnlockFood.ca – Kids, Sugar and Healthy Eating](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health – Is Sugar Unhealthy for Children?](#)
- [Guelph Family Health Study – Sugar Intake in Preschoolers](#)
- Blog post by Rosanne Robinson, RD: [My kid is obsessed with sugar: what should I do?](#)
- Call 8-1-1 or [email](#) to speak to a registered dietitian (RD) for advice, tips, or help
- [HealthLinkBC – Dental care for preschoolers](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health – Low cost dental clinics](#)
- [Greater Vancouver Food Bank – Preschooler Pack Nutritional Program](#)
- [Reading List](#)



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