

Label Awareness

If a label has a fact about a product on the front of the packaging, trying to catch your attention hoping you will buy it when you see this message - be aware ! Check the back of the packet or the fine print to see if there is anything lurking in the background.

Labels

Fat Free

Be aware that products advertised as fat free or virtually fat free are usually high in sugar and/or sweeteners. Remember that surplus amounts of sugar in the blood is converted to fat to be stored in the body.

If a product claims to be 90% Fat Free, then that means 10% of the product is Fat (10g per 100g)

So if the portion size is 400g, that's 40g of fat.

Sugar Free

And also if a label says Sugar Free be sure to read the fine print, the product is normally sweetened with artificial sweeteners, aspartame being the most common. Artificial sweeteners can have a neuro-toxic affect on some people (affecting the function of the brain and nervous system). Aspartame has also been linked to child behavioral problems.

It's also worth noting that consumption of sugar free foods loaded with artificial sweeteners can increase our appetite as they are 'empty calories'. Our digestive system expects to receive foods that can be broken down into energy when we eat, so when we consume sugar free/calorie free drinks etc our digestive system is left unsatisfied & will result in an increasing appetite & cravings to provide the calories your digestive system though it was getting. Studies have found that artificial sweeteners such as aspartame can:

- Stimulate your appetite
- Increase carbohydrate cravings
- Stimulate fat storage and weight gain

The belief that artificially sweetened foods and beverages will help you lose weight is a carefully orchestrated deception. So if you are still opting for "diet" choices for this reason, you are being sorely miss-led.

Children's Food Products

Children's products are not exempt from this, so please be label aware and read what you are buying!

How to understand a food label ?

Read the column under the heading “per 100g”. Think of the numbers in that column as percentages (parts per hundred). Here’s an example:

	Per serving	Per 100g
Carbohydrate		
Total	20g	60g
Of which sugars	10g	30g

Total carbohydrates - Tells you how many grams of carbohydrates are in each serving. This number includes starches, complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, added sugar sweeteners, and non-digestible additives. **Of which sugars** indicates the amount of the total carbs which is made up of sugars. So here 30g of this product in 100g is sugar, this means 30% of the product is sugar! So that is one third sugar!

Here are some fairly good reasons to reduce the refined sugar in your diet:

What does refined sugar do to your body ?

- It makes the digestive system acidic, which leaches vitamins and minerals from the body particularly calcium from bones and teeth. It also depletes potassium and magnesium which are both essential for cardiac health.
- It suppresses the immune system, it is especially important if you are ill to reduce your refined sugar intake. (so don't bring chocolate to someone that is sick !)
- It impairs liver function, which can lead to high blood pressure, skin issues and acne.
- It inhibits blood flow and affects aging, contributing to dental issues, increased wrinkles and dry, aged skin.
- It depletes the body of B vitamins (important for energy)
- Refined sugar is linked to insomnia, hair loss, ADD/ADHD, allergies, skin irritations, manic depression, tooth decay, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, obesity, hypoglycemia, type 2 diabetes, colon and pancreatic cancer.
- Sugar raises insulin levels, inhibiting the release of growth hormones which depresses the immune system. Further, too much insulin promotes the storage of fat, so that when you eat foods that are high in sugar, you’re enabling rapid weight gain and elevated triglyceride levels, both of which have been linked to cardiovascular disease.

Ingredients:

Ingredients of a product are listed in the order of the quantity contained in that product.

So if Sugar is the first ingredient you can bet there is a lot of sugar in this product. If there is a long list of ingredients this product is a far distance from being a wholefood product and is likely to be full of unnecessary additives that our livers must process, detoxify & eliminate. If the label list contains words you don't understand or don't sound like ingredients you would associate with food & cooking it is also best to avoid.

Be aware that manufacturers try to use several terms for **sugar** to blind you by the actual amount of sugar that is in the product.

Because sugar is cheap and makes such a difference to the taste, food manufacturers love to add it to their products.

Here are some other Sugar Names:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cane sugar | 7. Golden Syrup |
| 2. Corn syrup | 8. High-fructose corn syrup |
| 3. Dextrose | 9. Invert sugar |
| 4. Fructose | 10. Maltodextrin |
| 5. Fruit juice | 11. Maltose |
| 6. Glucose | 12. Sucrose |

A useful tool to get a realistic understanding of the amount of sugar in a food product is to remember that **4.2 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon of sugar.**

For example a 12-oz. can of Coca-Cola Classic contains 41 g of sugar = 10tsp, which is a lot of sugar to consume in one drink.

In summary:

Always read the label on any pre-packaged foods. Avoid those with long lists of ingredients or with ingredients you can't pronounce! Remember that ingredients lists are in order of highest quantity in the product, so if sugar is first in the list then the product will contain a lot of sugar.

Ask yourself is there as simple, convenient way I can make the product at home with fresh healthy ingredients? For example soups or tomato pasta sauces can be made at home quickly and cheaply & can be batch-cooked & frozen for convenience.

If not investigate if there are healthier versions on the market.

Above all, aim to reduce your reliance on pre-packaged processed foods & fill your shopping trolley with lots of fresh, unprocessed wholefoods that you can incorporate into your daily life.