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**Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet...and we should eat less than we do.** It is estimated that Americans consume an average of 17 teaspoons of sugar each day – that is equal to one-third of a cup and is about 2-3 times more than is recommended! Women and children are suggested to consume less than six teaspoons (25 grams) a day, and men should consume less than nine teaspoons (37 grams) a day.

### **The extra sweetness comes with significant health risks including:**

- ♥ higher risk for high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease in adults.
- ♥ higher risk for heart disease in children.
- ♥ 30% higher risk of death from heart disease in adults who consumed just 10-25% of their calories from sugar.

**So where are you getting the extra sugar?** About 47% of the excess sugar comes from what you sip – not including milk and 100% fruit juice that don't have sugar added to them. Soda, sport drinks, sweetened teas and coffee drinks top the list of sugar suppliers. Children are getting extra sugar from sweetened fruit drinks. Even consuming 20 ounces of regular soda a day alone provides about 16 teaspoons of sugar.



### **Here are some other ingredient names for “sugar” to look for on the food label to limit:**

- ♥ white sugar, brown sugar, beet sugar, raw sugar, cane sugar
- ♥ fruit nectars
- ♥ fruit juice or juice concentrates
- ♥ honey, maple syrup, sweet sorghum or molasses (also known as treacle)
- ♥ corn sweetener
- ♥ cane juice

### **So, what are some things to do to cut back on your sugar intake? Try these:**

- ♥ Gradually cut back on use of sugar – you don't have to do it all overnight.
- ♥ Focus needs to be on limiting all forms of sugar; there are several forms and the body breaks them down basically the same whether it is sugar, syrup or honey.
- ♥ Rethink your drink. Pour a glass of water or unsweetened milk, coffee or tea. If you need some flavor in your water add fruit, cucumber slices or mint leaves.
- ♥ Limit goodies; they will be more of a treat when you keep them for special occasions. Plus, if they aren't available, you won't expect to eat them routinely.
- ♥ Read food labels to look for any forms of sugar that may be added. The new food label coming out soon will include “added sugars” so it will be easier to determine if a food has been sweetened by the manufacturer or Mother Nature.
- ♥ You can use other things to give food a sweet flavor without sugar such as cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla extract or almond extract.
- ♥ Use rewards with your children that aren't related to food like play their favorite board game or read an extra book with them instead of giving them a cookie.

**February is American Heart Month to raise awareness of heart disease and how to prevent it.**

