



## HEALTHY HEART

### Too Sweet for Your Heart

#### Dangers of Too Much Sugar

Have you ever looked at a food package and wondered where on the nutrition label does it show what the recommended daily sugar consumption is?

The World Health Organization has set its limit at 10% of your daily calories in sugars, while the Institute of Medicine in the US recommends less than 25%.

In Canada, however, there is no official guideline on what is considered a safe level of sugar consumption. Rather, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada encourages Canadians to follow Canada's Food Guide.

With or without official regulation on recommended sugar consumption, we all know that excessive sugar intake is linked to weight gain. What we all may not know is that overconsumption can cause chronic health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity and even certain forms of cancer, according to *JAMA Internal Medicine* journal. In fact, those who consume 10-25% of their daily diet from sugar can increase their cardiovascular risk by 30%.

It goes without saying that if you consume sugar, it should be in fruits, vegetables and dairy products, where

sugar occurs naturally. Consult with Canada's Food Guide for allowable daily servings. Foods that contain added sugars, such as sodas, sports drinks, cakes and other desserts, should be limited. As well, be mindful of hidden sugars in sauces, dressings, cereals, soups, etc.

Not only will your waistline thank you for it, your heart will too.

## HEALTHY MIND

### Eat Well and Be Healthy

#### March is Nutrition Month

So much goes on in a workday that eating the right foods (or even just eating at all) is often viewed as a chore and pushed off the priority list. In fact, according to the Dietitians of Canada, 45% of Canadians say that eating healthy meals and snacks during the workday is challenging.

Every March, the Dietitians of Canada remind us of the importance of proper nutrition to our everyday well-being. Not only does nutrition play a role in work productivity, it can also reduce absenteeism by helping to improve overall health. This year's campaign slogan "Eating 9 to 5" is aimed at helping us eat better at the workplace.

Here are some health tips to help ease those challenging times during a work day:

- **Rushed mornings** – Make breakfast a priority as it will help provide you with energy to get through the morning. For a fast and easy meal, make barley, quinoa or oat porridge and refrigerate in portions the night before. In the morning, you can simply reheat and add in fruit and seeds.
- **Meetings, events** – If you know that a platter of croissants and donuts will be served at the meeting, bring some healthier alternatives, such as yogurt or unsalted nuts. Perhaps you can suggest that fresh fruits and vegetables be available at your next meeting instead.
- **Lunchtime** – Bring your own lunch to help control your food option and portion. If you need to eat out, be cognizant of the oversize restaurant portions. Opt to share a large meal with a friend or eat half the meal and wrap up the remainder. If there is time, go for a walk afterward.
- **Mid-day slump** – Stand up during phone calls, or walk to deliver a message instead of emailing. Be hydrated with plenty of water to stay alert. Low fat milk and unsweetened herbal tea are good options if you are looking for a beverage with a little more essence. If you have a fridge at work, store nutrient-rich snacks, such as fruit, vegetables, hummus, and low-fat cheese.
- **Commuter cravings** – Always carry healthy snacks, such as carrot sticks and an apple, during your commute to avoid overeating at dinner time. When you get home, make dinner preparations a fun thing to do by rounding up the family to help. That way, everyone is distracted and not reach for any pre-dinner munchies.

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Source: Dietitians of Canada

**TRG**  
GROUP BENEFITS

## HEALTHY LIVING

### “Superfoods”

#### What We All Need To Eat

We all know there is no magic pill that can reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer, while shedding excess weight and put you in a good mood. It is, however, possible to attain most of these results without enduring any adverse side effects simply by adjusting your diet to include the following “superfoods”:

- **Blueberries** – They are loaded with antioxidants, phytoflavonoids, potassium and vitamin C to help lower your risk of heart disease, cancer and any inflammation.
- **Oily fish** – Salmon, sardines, herring, trout, tuna and mackerel are an excellent source of vitamins A and D and are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to improve cardiovascular health and reduce depression. There is also evidence to show that the omega 3s help with memory loss and Alzheimer’s.
- **Fibre** – Healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels can be better maintained with a high-fibre diet. Also, fibre helps you feel fuller longer so you can delay your next snack/meal and even reduce your portions. Excellent examples of high-fibre foods include whole grains, beans, fruit and vegetables.
- **Tea** – All teas have high levels of antioxidants, which fight free radicals that can contribute to the development of some cancers and heart disease. If possible, avoid adding heavy cream and sugar so you can taste the tea itself.
- **Calcium** – This vital mineral helps build strong bones and prevent osteoporosis. Calcium-rich foods include dairy products. For those who are lactose-intolerant, they can consume sardines, dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, turnips, collard greens), fortified cereals, fortified orange juice, soybeans, enriched breads and grains to get the same nutrients.

Source: WebMD